

# THE INDIAN RUNNER



DUCK

BOOK



*The White Queen*

C. S. VALENTINE







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*Valentine, Carolyn Syon*  
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# THE   INDIAN   RUNNER DUCK   BOOK.

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The Only Authoritative American Book  
about this Marvelous Egg Machine.

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"They say she did!"

"Who did?"

"The Indian Runner Duck."

"Did what?"

"Laid 320 eggs in one year."

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RIDGEWOOD, N. J.  
F. H. VALENTINE  
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## Some Guesses and Some Facts About INDIAN RUNNERS

### CHAPTER I

I think it was about 1904 or 1905 that the first important literature concerning the Indian Runner Ducks was published in this country. At about this time, good articles, dealing with the wonderful qualities of this new breed were published in at least three of our poultry periodicals. Soon, breeders, here and there, began to try them in a somewhat gingerly way, as though rather expecting a gold brick. The great service which this early literature did the breed was to call public attention strongly to it, through what then seemed the exorbitant claims made for these birds as layers.

After a few years Mr. Irving Cook took up this breed, advertising continuously and rather strikingly. As he began the work when young and enthusiastic, and, later, gave his entire strength to his Indian Runner business the Runners soon found themselves in the midst of a "boom." But even before him several men who still breed the Runners were at work with this breed.

As soon as the breed began to attract keen attention, some breeders who wished to improve it in every possible way began to make inquiries as to its origin. One early breeder who made every effort to get the true history about this time reports that even then "it seemed to be a matter of surmise. All the writers' ideas on the subject seemed to be vague, and many conflicting statements were made." Some of the causes for this haziness and conflict of statement I have been able to run down.

Much misconception arose through an accident. The first two detailed descriptions of the breed which I noted in American publications were from writers across the big waters, one in New Zealand, the other in Ireland. Birds in these countries would naturally have come from England, and be of English type. H. DeCourcy's article was so straightforward and sensible, yet so conservative that it seemed to give the public good ground for confidence in the breed. Unfortunately, this early article gave the West Indies as the original home of the Indian Runner. This statement has been copied by many, while others have given a widely different origin. In a recent circular, the matter was disposed of in this way: "Coming originally from the West Indies, they are a cross of Rouen and Wild Mallard." Of the three supposed facts given here (West Indian origin, Rouen blood, Mallard blood,) probably not one could be proven, though the last might have some credibility through the fact that most breeds of ducks are descended from the Mallard.

I have long suspected that the DeCourcy statement, as printed in this country, was an office, or "proof" error. Trying to get at the facts, I wrote to Mr. DeCourcy in October, 1910, inquiring if this were not the case. The reply was directly to the point: "If my article says 'West' it was a misprint,—or perhaps a clerical error of mine." As the real, native home of the Indian Runner has long been believed to be the EAST Indies, it is quite easy to see how such an error could arise through the misplacement of a single letter. At no other period except when the breed was just being introduced could such an error have worked so much mischief as to the facts.

Among the early breeders here were Mr. Cook, Mr. Fay Davis, Flint, Mich., M. V. Decker and, in 1900, A. J. Hallock. Mr. W. Delano's name has also been given me as an early breeder, but I have been unable to get any information from this source. It will be admitted without question, I think, that our one reliance for the early history of the breed in THIS COUNTRY must be the statements of the earliest breeders.

While the "West Indies story" was going the rounds, with no one



contradicting it, and gaining strength through repetition, the British birds were being quietly bred for some time, before the public began to awake to the value of the Runners. The Davids brothers, of Kansas, began about 1902, Davis in 1897, Hallock in 1900. These three, I know, had their birds from Great Britain. I think there is no room for doubt that all the other early breeders had stock from the same source, either direct or through contemporary breeders. Since it appears that the earliest specimens here came from British sources, it seems to be only ordinary common-sense to take British testimony as to their origin. The English early history—as far as it is history, and not supposition, at least—should be admitted to be the true history. At all events, the guesses and “impressions” of later breeders here, have absolutely no value.

During the present season not less than 160 breeders have been advertising Indian Runners. There may have been more, but I have a list showing this number. Seven years ago, *Reliable Poultry Journal*—for years a favorite medium with the duck breeders—carried only two Indian Runner advertisements in May in the Classified list. The Runners have appeared almost wholly in the classified lists; since they seem to have been almost universally welcomed as an accessory to other breeds of fancy fowls. At all events, they have sold so easily that only classified advertising has been necessary, apparently.

One of the two who were thus advertising in 1903 was Cook. In 1906 he blossomed out as the breeder of “the only true fawn and white colors, and the world’s heaviest laying strain.” He had, then, five competitors in the classified column. Remembering that this was only four years ago, we may well be amazed at the advance which the Runners have so recently made in public favor. According to these figures, the fawn and white type became “the only true” just about five years ago. It may be remembered, also, that this was the year the Standard which breeders have followed for the last five years, appeared.

It would seem that, even in Great Britain, the Runners were not well and widely known so very much longer than they have been known

here. In 1893, four years before Mr. Davis received his first birds, a book on poultry for profit was put out by a Britisher who had previously written another poultry book, and who might have been thought to be fairly well posted. He mentions only three breeds of ducks, but takes occasion to remark: "It is much to be regretted that no steps have been taken to breed laying strains of ducks."

The history of the Runner in England, however, is easily to be followed back for about twenty-five years. If it becomes hazy as we go farther back, this need not surprise the Yankees who have managed so to conceal their tracks in something like fifteen years that in a new book advertised as the best in America, and giving SIXTEEN ENTIRE LINES to the Runners, it is plainly stated that the origin of these ducks cannot be traced authentically. But a Rouen cross is admitted. Was that Rouen cross a Yankee contribution?

If, as no one doubts, the Indian Runner Ducks came to us from England, it would seem, indeed, the part of common-sense, and of courtesy no less, to accept the story of their origin as presented by the best and oldest English breeders. American cleverness, however, professes to have discovered that the Britishers, no matter how decent people they be, are presumably equivocating about the origin of the Indian Runner duck.

The juxtaposition of a quasi-Yankee head and a Belgic head has brought up a new story, to the effect that the Britishers did not get their Runners from East India or any other old place whence old sea-captains come out of obscurity, but just across the channel in Belgium! But they have carelessly omitted to tell us how it happened that when those Belgian ducks flew (?) across the channel, they happened to light in County Cumberland, away off to the north-west, as far as possible from Belgium. Frankly, I think this story very far-fetched. For, the English certainly could not be ignorant of the existence of these thousands of Belgian ducks. If they were really the same thing as the Indian Runners it would be well known on both sides of the channel, in which case the only possible conclusion would be that the English breeders

have deliberately clouded their origin, and lied about it for these scores of years. I do not believe fair minded Americans wish to support this unworthy view.

Some information so definite and detailed that it would seem as though it must be correct, has recently come to me through an English Correspondent. I have not had sufficient time since to ferret out the treatise giving this information, to which my correspondent refers. His letter reads as follows: "The earliest history of the fowl, (I. R. Duck) that can be gathered is that they were closely associated with the ancient Hindus in India 1000 years B. C. The bird appealed to them through its fighting qualities. Thus it was that the fowl was first domesticated, not for its food value so much as its sporting qualities. It was principally located in the Punjaub, Northern India; its culture spread over India, then distributed through the islands of the Indian Ocean and into China, and as civilization increased and commerce and colonization commenced it gradually worked its way through the Malay archipelago into Persia, and thence into the European countries. I have not been able to find the treatise I have somewhere on this subject or would have sent it to you."

I do not give these as absolutely the facts, because I have, at the present, no other basis for it than the memory of a single correspondent. But, in view of the interest in the matter, and the many guesses, it seemed well to give this, also, a place.



# English History

## VIEWS AND STANDARD

### CHAPTER II

After we trace back to a certain period, or, possibly, forty years or so, the history of the Indian Runner in England becomes somewhat hazy. English breeders say that the earliest literature on the breed—or, at least, that which goes farthest back, is a little treatise by John Donald, who lived in County Cumberland, where the breed was first known. In this book, Mr. Donald states that the Indian Runners were brought to England by a sea captain, about sixty years before his book was written. H. DeCourcy, of Ireland, a writer whom we know quite well in America—thinks it is now twenty years since he first saw this (undated) book. This would make it eighty years since the breed first made any history in England that is now remembered—a period so remote that none would now be alive who had personal knowledge of the facts and of its introduction and earliest history.

One of the English treatises, "The Indian Runner," was written by Jacob Thomlinson, who first knew this duck in County Cumberland. He refers to Mr. Donald's (earlier) work, and also to a brief treatise by Mr. Henry Digby, giving credit to these men for all items not within his own, personal knowledge. The illustrations in the Thomlinson pamphlet are from drawings by Mr. J. W. Walton, Secretary of the present Indian Runner Duck Club. "They give," says Mr. Thomlinson, "a clear insight of what a TRUE Runner SHOULD and SHOULD NOT be."

The models from which these pictures were drawn "have won prizes at the great National Shows." They were intended to be used as "a guide to both old and new fanciers, to obtain a more uniform idea of type and standard."

Mr. Thomlinson's own knowledge of the breed reached back thirty years, but his treatise was also undated. However, he gives us a point to rest on by saying that he first took "particular notice" of these birds in 1884, when one duck made for him a record of 180 eggs. As this "completely overshadowed" other breeds, it was the foundation of Mr. Thomlinson's vital interest in the Indian Runners.

The peculiar, running gait, it is thought, seems proof of the Indian Runners being survivors of the fittest, long ago, in a barren region lacking in vegetation and abundant insect life, where the usual type of waddling duck would have died from want of sufficient sustenance, through sheer inability to forage so fast and so far. Tradition, vague rumor, or what not, gave rise to a belief that the original home of these birds was the East Indies.

From the fact that Mr. Donald was a resident of County Cumberland, the original seat of Indian Runner culture in England, it seems to follow that he is most likely to be right as to their origin, and it was to him that the earlier English breeders looked very largely for information.

The power of the true Indian Runner to stamp its color and marking, in the case of a cross, is taken as evidence of very long fixation of its characteristics in the native state. Eighty per cent of such progeny, it is said will favor the Runner, especially in characteristic color. This varies considerably above the proportion given by Mendel's law.

English breeders seem willing to allow that the long neglect has made it impossible that many types should not appear in various parts of the Island; for, the original blood must have been largely tainted during the slowness of the nation to recognize the peculiar value of the breed, and to place it early under the care of some organization which would watch out for the preservation of the most valuable and vital

characteristics. Like the Rhode Island Red in this country, the breed had a sadly neglected youth.

Quite a number of importations have in later years, been made into this country from the flocks of Mr. J. W. Walton, "Honorable Secretary" of the Indian Runner Duck Club of England. Mr. Walton says that the best birds have always been in a very few hands. He wrote me, personally, that even in England "breeders, exhibitors and judges fell into nearly every possible trouble with Indian Runners and reduced them from an outstanding and most distinctive bird to a common type, small, cross-bred duck with fairly even markings. That was the Exhibition Runner (?) of eight or nine years ago. 100  $\frac{1}{10}$  of American (Standard-bred) Runners and 99  $\frac{9}{10}$  of English are wrong in shape, and position of legs. Color without type is of no value."

Mr. Walton has also said that it was quite certain that many earlier judges of Indian Runners "had no acquaintance with the genuine Runner." It was under this strained situation that the Indian Runner Duck Club in England took up the work, and formed a Standard calculated to preserve the distinctiveness of this most remarkable breed. The birds illustrated in English poultry journals at about this time, according to Mr. Walton, "showed strong evidence of Mallard blood."

It was within the decade before the English breeders found their bearings that most of our earlier importations were made. This shows how strong was the probability that many of these earlier importations were of mixed blood. It was about or just previous to this time that the Indian Runner Duck Club intervened to save the Runners from extinction as to their most distinctive characteristics. It superseded the Standard formed by Mr. Donald and Mr. Digby, (with which there had been dissatisfaction for some time) by one better designed "to retain the valuable utility and artistic qualities" of the breed. A part of its object, as stated, was to keep the exhibition of the Runner "free from dishonorable and fraudulent practices."

In order to get at the English ideal of shape, it may be well to give a word to "the old, cod, soda-water bottle." This bottle, whose



form is given as a general model to work toward, tapered toward each end. The taper is gradual, in the bird, from the thighs back. Mention is made of the funnel-like expansion where neck passes into body. The accepted angle of carriage is up to sixty-five degrees when the bird is traveling, and from this to seventy-five degrees when alert. The neck is a strong feature, the head and neck together carrying thirty points.

LENGTH, THINNESS, and FINENESS are especially demanded. In these points, the great majority of American Runners fail, breeders seeming to overlook the added beauty and grace given by a slender neck.

I shall not try to give the English Standard demands in their entirety, but will refer to those which need study, in view of the swinging away in type and color by the American Standard, and by the birds shown in America. The color demanded in contrast with the white is a fawn, rather warm and soft, sometimes expressed also as of "ginger color" a term which the American breeders have adopted, but which I have not seen in the American shows. The newest males shown here are decidedly of a pinkish, rather than ginger tone, a shade which carries



Pen of selected descendants of nestlings shown in another cut. From the earlier importations, and bred to English Standard. Young stock. Mature coat was just completed. Seventeen weeks old. Will become more slender with more age.

directly toward the claret which is disqualified by the American Standard. The color is required to be uniform, from surface to skin.

The chief variations between color-tones, from English and American points of view, is in the head and rump of the drake and the body, fawn color and overlay on the shoulders. The last point is often strong in color, the pencilings being rather distinct, but they are supposed to blend into a warm fawn of the true shade desired, when seen from a short distance away. The trick in getting color on the English-bred Runner, is to get one tone a good ginger, and the other as near it as is possible, the outer portion being the lighter. As this is the portion most visible on the breast and body, it gives the appearance of evenness, as soon as the new coat loses a little in strength of color. If too weak in color when the new coat is first donned, it will be washy in the extreme after a few weeks, and will well justify the term so often applied to the lighter birds bred to American Standard, "a dirty white." This loss of color is one of the worst things that can befall a true Runner. I am loath to use the word "true" at all in speaking of the Runners, since it has been so juggled and made to mean such widely different things. "Genuine" might, perhaps, be a better term.

The full stern, of the upturning, Pekin type, is considered a defect, although this cannot be allowed to count strongly against females that have laid one or two seasons. The rump of the male and its head may be of a dull, rather bronzy green.

The English Standard lays emphasis on the point that type must receive greater consideration than color or markings. Short, thick necks, squat specimens, smallness at the expense of the long shape, are decided defects. Slate and dark red in drakes are not favored.

It should be perfectly plain to any normal mind that the English type of Indian Runner, being so much [older] than anything in America, justly lays claim to the title of "The True Indian Runner." There are many breeders in America who are breeding as nearly as possible to the English (genuine) Standard, possibly yielding a very little on color in

order not to have a bird too widely different from the one demanded by the American Standard. Up to the present, (so convinced were many of our judges, even, that the American Standard was not requiring the true type) the English-bred birds have been able to get, in some instances very good prizes, though not often the best. Last year, such a male bird took second at Madison Square Garden. From what I hear, I judge that the ax is to be applied to such birds at future shows.

"Whose birds was the American Standard made to fit?" asked a correspondent, suspiciously, not long ago. The only testimony given to the public on this point inheres in the advertisements of two of them, that ONLY their birds meet the requirements of the new revision.

For months before the latest revision of the American Standard of Perfection, a sustained fight was made to educate the public, and incidentally, the Revision Committee, up to a knowledge of the real type of the genuine, Indian Runners, and of the injury the proposed action would be to the breeders of the English type, and to the breed. Perhaps a dozen breeders took part in this, one being a poultry judge. But the Standard had called for an entirely different type for so many years, that the Revisers were simply afraid to give any recognition to the breeders of the genuine Indian Runners. Indeed, it was scarcely to be expected that the Standard-makers would so publicly acknowledge a sustained error. Moreover, the known custom in this country, with all breeds, of making the Standard to fit the aims and ideals of the greatest number of the more powerful breeders, stood in the way. It is no doubt true that there are more of the present breeders who favor the "plain" type of solid fawn, with white, than of the breeders who favor the penciled fawn type. This penciled type is not insistently penciled, except when the feathers are first grown, but is rather dimly penciled in two shades so harmonious and so near together in tone that they gently blend into a color which appears as a solid color as the season advances. The cuts shown herewith, of birds soon after molting, will easily give proof of this.



I do not think there is, in the ranks of the breeders of the original variety, any feeling of enmity toward the favored American type, in itself. But the feeling is very general—I think I may say fairly, universal—that the breed name belongs of right to the original type. The other should have come in, if come it must, as a second variety, with a variety name. It is precisely as though the Silver Penciled Wyandotte should attempt to push aside the original Silver Wyandotte, and make insistent claim to being “the only true Wyandotte.” Surely “SHAPE makes the breed, color (only) the variety.” Is it not so, breeders?

It is by no means impossible to rectify this error, even yet, since there are other revisions ahead. And it is the great hope of those who are breeding really good Runners of the White-egg type, that our Standard makers may undergo an operation for strabismus before the time of the next revision. We’d like them to SEE STRAIGHT!

# Present Show Quality of AMERICAN STANDARD INDIAN RUNNERS

## CHAPTER III

The American Standard type of Indian Runners, as seen in the best shows, is not only a different type of bird from the English Runner, but it is in the main decidedly different from the ideal which has, up to the present date of writing, been pictured and described in the American Standard of Perfection. The ideals of the breeders have been gradually changing, as to color, and the birds that win now are quite different in color from those that won a few years ago. The allowance of gray as well as the preferred fawn, while possibly it seemed necessary at the beginning, has not worked to the good of the breed. A far larger proportion of males still come with gray breasts than would have been the case could the Standard have demanded, from the first, that fawn should be the one color, without the gray as an alternate.

I have studied much over the peculiar demands at some points of the American Standard of Perfection, in its dealing with Indian Runners. Its ideal pictures in the 1905 American Standard are near the demands for good Runners, as laid down by the English Standard. At two points in the description, however, the American demand swings quite away from the English. Where the latter calls for legs placed well back, and makes legs placed too wide apart a defect, the American Standard demands legs "set well apart." And whereas the English Standard calls for bronzy green on the head and rump of male the Stand-

ard has demanded as the ideal, for the 5 years previous to 1910 a light fawn color, which must be even throughout the entire plumage, except where the white markings should be seen.

The American demand for "light fawn" has now been modified to "fawn" and the color is really a peculiar, almost indescribable light pinky-brown. It is, without doubt, a beautiful color and very much admired; but so much has shape been subordinated to color-tone of the "fawn" that the winning birds at the great New York State Fair, in September, 1910, showed nasty, white splotches in the fawn spoiling the color-marking most decidedly. These birds bore virtually no resemblance to the ideal in the then Standard of Perfection, as to shape and carriage being low in carriage, beefy in type, and, as one has described this type, "more like a Rouen than a Runner," although not so heavy as the former.

In November, 1910, I went to the earlier show held in New York, chiefly to study the Indian Runners. These picked birds were mainly very good in the even color now preferred for both sexes—really a handsome pinkish fawn. Only a few were good in carriage; scarcely one had a fine neck; and fully thirty per cent were notably splashed with white in the fawn of the back. A neck defect which breeders have not seemed to take into account (the proof being that it is so general) is that, the neck being already too short and thick, is made to look shorter and thicker by having the dividing line between the colors too high. It is often cut squarely, but in about one-third the single specimens shown, there was only about an inch to an inch-and-a-half between the cheek marking and the fawn of the lower neck. The Walton ideal sketch shows the white on a slender neck and nearly five-eighths the length of the fawn marking on the side of the breast, at the point where it extends entirely to the square cut in marking across the breast. This gives a widely different appearance to the bird.

The illustrations of Indian Runners in the poultry publications generally, have not been of a sort to furnish much of an ideal to breeders in general. There are a few birds of typical carriage in this country,



but they are still very few; I mean of those which will hold the carriage practically all the time. The photographs from life commonly published, give little hint of the Runner which the "Ideal" in the Standard has shown. The new Standard is to contain a new and improved "ideal." Some years ago, Mrs. Mabel Feint made a pencil sketch from life which was very good for the time, though a trifle too full in breast, not showing the straight under line of body which is typical of the real Runner, and which even the American Standard "Ideal" demands. This cut is still in use in some quarters. The photographs I have seen, even up to the present time, have not been, as a rule, as good as Mrs. Feint's "Ideal." She was a breeder of Runners for some years, and the birds she carried are still bred as a distinct strain. In her time, these won over many of those from the more prominent breeders. The American type of birds are claimed to be "sports" from birds imported from England. Inasmuch as English breeders, for many of the earlier years, flirted with the solid-color will-o'-the-wisp, it would not be at all strange if some of the birds from England at that early date should throw sports. But the better English breeders have long decried and regretted their waste of time, and the detriment they worked the breed for a period before they learned to breed strictly to the typical color.

I doubt that it is possible, in this year 1910, to buy of any American breeder, birds that will hold their carriage all the time, except at strictly exhibition stock prices. I think this is proven true, in the east, where many of the earlier Indian Runner breeders were located, by the fact that so few really good ones are seen, even at the most important shows.

One needs to handle Runners for some time, and learn their typical carriage and their habits of behavior at different periods of growth not only, but at different stages, in order to criticise them fairly. Probably it has occurred to very few that it is almost impossible for a laying bird to hold her typical carriage and form. There is abundant reason for this, with the Runners. A single I.

Runner egg ready for exclusion, is likely to weigh three ounces, and the ducks are quite reasonably likely to lay six days out of seven, during at least a portion of the year. Prof. James E. Rice, by experiment, found that a color-fed hen deposited some fourteen layers in the formation of an egg, showing that the egg had been fourteen days in growing from the pin-head ovule to the two-ounce product of average exclusion. If we may suppose a duck to be 14 days in growing an egg, from the beginning to its readiness for exclusion, and laying six eggs in a week, she must be carrying within her narrow body, at one time, twelve eggs, of diminishing sizes from the three-ounce finished product, to the tiny, but enlarging ovule of the egg cluster. It is, of course, impossible to conceive that such a weight of eggs should not change both the shape and the carriage of the female, for the time being. Thus it comes about that we have to speak of these birds as in "exhibition form" and "laying form," while there is still another period of nearly half a year, during which they eat so much that they appear rather logy, and assume the carriage of maturity only at intervals. This is during their growth toward maturity, and we need for this period a third term, such as "growing form," to describe them then.

One of my correspondents who is very anxious for the true Indian Runner to become well known and well liked, rather regretted the fact that Mr. J. W. Walton's pen pictures of ideal Runners were published in this country, since they show such an exaggerated type to American eyes that those buyers without experience would be dissatisfied with any average Runner that could now be sent them. I may say, however, that in my experience, no fowl ever sent out has given such good, general satisfaction as the type of English Indian Runners now bred in this country. Nearly all the letters of acknowledgment which I receive, as well as those which other breeders have shown me, express the greatest satisfaction with the average birds. A short time ago, I saw one which

read thus: "I have never received anything by express which gave me so much satisfaction and delight as the coop of Indian Runners you sent me." These were the average run of low priced birds, say at about two dollars each.

There is a reason for this in the fact that, although but few of the Runners hold the distinctive carriage all the time, and, being few, are held for the high prices, yet the average Runner will almost invariably show off nicely whenever frightened, or excited or free to run and pose. And I have never known any breed which seemed to possess so much of interest for its breeders, whether they were, or were not, finished fanciers.

But, there is much more to the question of true type in Indian Runners than has yet appeared in our survey. More and more, as the years pass, are fanciers falling into line on the declaration that no breed can survive long and prosper, even as a fancy fowl, unless it is first a capital, utility fowl. This may be called, I think, a foundation tenet of The Fancy at the present time. Few advertisers permit themselves to put forth any claims to trade without supporting them strongly with testimony and assertion as to the superior utility value of their breed, and especially of their particular strain of that breed. Even the story of the superlative fancy value of the "\$10,000 hen" must be buttressed by the statement that her progeny lay at the rate of 83 eggs in four months; and is not this by implication, 249 eggs a year, with chances of 250 in leap years?

On the very day of this writing, I have read, from the pen of Mr. Robinson, one of our leading poultry editors, the statement that, as he sees it, the poultry business, except in such special lines as the growing of soft roasters and of ducks for market, is going out of the hands of specialists into the hands of the farmers; and, it goes without saying, almost, that the Indian Runner, being a champion layer and a prolific breeder, will soon cease to be of much use to The Fancy, through sheer over-production, **unless** the farmers

awake very widely to its value. The Indian Runner must become—and that very soon—the farmer's duck.

In the Runner camp, a rumble has been growing for some little time. During 1910 it has risen almost to a roar. The Runner of the emasculated type called for by the American Standard of Perfection, although lovely to look upon for color, in its best estate, has a great weakness as a producer of eggs for market, in the fact that it lays a large proportion of green eggs (a few call them "blue.") It does not need much argument, I think, to convince any one with an unbiased mind that the crystal-white egg produced by the English Standard Runner is far and away more desirable for a market egg than one tinted more or less deeply with green.

A card that came to me yesterday, written from the very center of the green-egg camp, gives a fair idea of the situation. One may read between the lines as to how the green-egg type has satisfied this breeder. I quote literally: "Are your Indian Runners the kind that lay white eggs only? Will you sell them guaranteed to lay white eggs or refund the purchase price? Please quote price on 50 eggs from \* \* \* **white egg strain.**"

A breeder of American Standard Runners, having had much trouble and complaint regarding the large output of green eggs, wrote to another asking counsel, and saying, among other things, that the green-egg type were not so good layers as the others. The attitude of the recipient of this letter is shown in a brief paragraph from the reply: "It is said in England fully 80% of the (so-called) Indian Runners have very little Indian Runner blood in them, and a still worse condition prevails here, because of our Standard. Owing to this Standard, there are very few genuine Indian Runners to be found."

This sweeping statement harks back to the fact that English breeders, as I have noted above, tried so hard to "improve" their Runners that they nearly ran them into the ground, and came near



losing the real Runner completely. At present, not only in England, but in her colonies, the feeling of the better breeders against any admixture of outside blood is intense. In Australia, the birds that won in the great competition were English, Standard-bred Runners. Mr. Dunncliffe, the secretary for the competitions, as I note elsewhere, told me personally that nothing else will be accepted in Australia.

## Comparison of ENGLISH and AMERICAN TYPES

### CHAPTER IV

For a breed that is sweeping the country with such amazing swiftness, the Indian Runner has received far too little really critical attention. It has been bred in England several times as many years as it has been noticed and bred here, and in both countries one craze of the average breeder seems to have been to modify it in order to get more size. This is folly, even from the utility point of view, for the minute you increase size you increase eating capacity, and eating capacity beyond what is needed to produce flesh and eggs is dead against economy in an animal that has a specific, great point, like the egg-laying tendency of the Indian Runner.

Many breeders of the Indian Runner have been calling attention to the proud fact that Indian Runners won the Australian Contest prize with a marvelous record, as announced a year ago. But the majority of them have not a shadow of right to use this as a talking point for their birds, since it was a far different bird from the American Standard Runner which made these records.

Believing that this was the fact, I wrote, some time ago, to Mr. Dunncliffe, Organizing Secretary, in connection with the Hawkesbury contests, asking him what kind of Runners were in these Australian contests. He very kindly wrote me the facts, which supported my belief. These are his exact words: "The Indian

Runners kept in Australia have been bred from stock imported from England. The English Standard is followed by all our poultry clubs and shows. As is the case elsewhere, there are people here who breed Rouen blood into them to improve the size, but any trace of this blood in them would knock them out in the shows. In the matter of laying, we find that any infusion of Rouen blood depreciates them, and the best laying records have been put up by birds of pure, English blood, selected here for many years for their laying capacity."

The American Indian Runner, being bred to our Standard, has been much modified. The distinctive Runner shape has been subordinated to color, the color lightened, the capacity for breeding true largely destroyed, and the value as a layer lessened, all in order to get a plain contrast to the white, instead of a penciled one. Perhaps the new manufacture is prettier; since beauty is largely a matter of opinion, I will not question that. But we have lost three or four most valuable characteristics in getting it. The English breeders who at one period thoughtlessly risked all these to get size, have more excuse, since they thought this an economic advance.

Within a few days, recently, I received two letters, both from strangers, on the lookout for white-egg Runners. One of them said that he had been buncoed, for his "fawn and white" ducks were all colors, many being white. The other wrote: "I got 100 eggs of \_\_\_\_\_, this spring, ordering white, but getting mixed colors and small eggs, and most of the ducklings were white. I sent to \_\_\_\_\_, and got fine layers of large, pale green and white eggs." One of the firms mentioned by this correspondent was a Chicago winner, the year he bought, and the other a firm that has had more write-ups and free readers and puffs than most of the other well-known water-fowl breeders put together. And I call attention to the fact that there were two distinct types, from these two different breeders of "fawns," into one, at least, of which white blood had been introduced; and probably some into

the other also, but more carefully. Neither of them was of the true, white-egg type.

There is one specific point, viz., length—about the genuine Runner, aside from the carriage, which I have not seen referred to in periodicals in this country, although the Standard does say that the birds shall be long and narrow. The long birds were frequently downed at New York in favor of those showing the light, even fawn, evenness seeming to be the chief item in a good Runner, from the American point of view, in addition to good carriage. Some of our show birds do have fine carriage, but a very large proportion of them in the yards of breeders have lost this through the out-crosses for color.

The English Standard gives something definite to go on, in stating what should be considered “fairly good weights and lengths;” though it cautions that these must not count alone, but must be in connection with well balanced type. It also recommends that judges see the birds on the run before making awards. But I think these “fair” lengths will open the eyes of our breeders. They are: 25 to 30 inches for ducks, and 28 to 36 inches for the drakes. Runners, **by the yard**, as one might say!

The stern, too, is very different from the Pekin type so often seen here in the winners. Birds that have laid for a considerable time do get heavier at the rear, but the true shape is quite light at the stern, tapering from the thighs to the tail. This, with the length and carriage gives a bird whose distinctiveness differentiates it from all other types the minute the eye falls on it. This, to my mind, is what we want, especially as this is the heavy laying type in this breed, according to testimony.

I have had, during this season, letters from two Indian Runner breeders, both of whom raise these birds by the hundreds, both of whom have the best birds going, of the light fawn type (that is, their stock is from this type, and very high in quality), and both of whom avow a belief that the English type of Runner is the true



type. Both are changing from the American type to the longer, more slender, white-egg type.

Judge Clipp has said publicly: "Consulting the numerous breeders of this famous duck during the show season, **nine out of ten** would admit that those of the penciled variety were the best layers." He also said: "I doubt if there is another fowl in existence that will lay as many eggs during the year as the Indian Runner. Even the Leghorn must take off her hat to the Indian Runner duck." Mr. Clipp speaks as a breeder, as well as a judge.

What might be considered to be a mongrel Runner? One, surely, which had been outbred strongly. What does the Buff Orpington Duck claim to be? A cross, **having Runner blood**. On the strength of Runner blood, and calling attention to this very size that shows the mongrel, its handlers are pushing this breed. It is probably a good breed; it can doubtless be bred up till it is considered once more pure in **blood**; but when it is, it will have mainly lost the Runner characteristics which now constitute one of its chief, talking points. Since, then, we already have a mongrel Runner with a breed name, let us beware lest we make the Indian Runner itself a mongrel by adding other blood, no matter of what name. The true Runner is so distinctive that it is more easily injured by outcrosses, it seems to me, than any other breed could possibly be.

It was certainly not **more** than 13 years after Mr. Thomlinson's first "particular attention" that the first birds were imported into this country. This makes it very probable indeed that the earlier birds imported into America, were very poor birds, from the present point of view of the English Indian Runner Duck Club. As they have been bred to the American Standard now for a number of years, it is perfectly fair to conclude that few or none of the English Standard-bred ducks have been imported in recent years. This would follow from the fact that Americans were breeding

away from the English Standard. I except, of course, those who are frankly breeding to the English Standard because they believe it more nearly correct. In Mr. Thomlinson's book appears a portrait of a Canadian duck, "never beaten in Canada," sketched—as a warning—by the Secretary of the English I. R. Club. The faults especially named are bad carriage, and "wide on legs." The width between legs and the solid fawn which the American ideal demands, are regarded by the English as decidedly detrimental to the breed. "If the legs are placed wide apart, you are certain to get a waddler instead of a Runner, and if not placed well back you get horizontal carriage," says Mr. Thomlinson. It is true that the English Standard demands an appearance of uniformity of the darker markings in the body color of the female, but it states with equal distinctness that these feathers may carry two tones, one described as "soft fawn," the other as penciling which is "brighter and warmer in tint." Milt avers that the overlapping of the feathers makes the females appear almost solid fawn, quite even in tone. This question does not come up with regard to the drakes, as they do not show penciling, in either type.

I wish more especially, however, to lay emphasis on the difference between the two types from the utility standpoint, for here, I believe, the real fight is to be made. Numbers of breeders who have had both types affirm that the English Standard-bred Runners are better layers; laying earlier, more in numbers, larger eggs, and eggs of better color. The Indian Runners of the English type lay eggs of a transparent whiteness not seen, so far as I know, in any other eggs offered for table use in the regular markets. They average three ounces, when the birds are well kept and matured. And, they are superior to hens' eggs for nearly all sorts of cooking. The American Standard-bred ducks, as a whole, lay a considerable proportion of green eggs, though the flocks vary, possibly, in this. At least, some breeders send out less than others. I fancy, too, that they make some careful discrimination. At least, one

breeder sent eggs to the President of the American Poultry Association, which the latter reported as being less than three per cent. green; while to another, who was a lesser light, were sent by the same breeder, a lot containing so many green eggs that the breeder was in utter despair, and forthwith turned about and bought eggs for hatching, of the English-bred type, by the hundreds, hatching until late in the season in order to get enough. I have read the letters making these statements.

A letter from Connecticut, received after the hatching season of 1910, runs as follows: "This spring, I set a 240-egg incubator with so-called Indian Runner ducks. Some of the eggs were white, but the majority green. The ducklings are most anything in color, from white to light fawn. I don't want an Indian Runner Duck on my place that lays a green egg. The only thing I am after is ducks that lay white eggs and are prolific layers. Can you start me right by telling me where I can buy Indian Runner Ducks that lay white eggs?" The demand for the white eggs only is growing so strong that both the utility man and the breeder of high-grade Standard exhibition birds are demanding guarantees that the strain shall lay strictly-white eggs. The only type that comes anywhere near this, so far as any testimony I have seen or heard, to date, goes, is the type bred to the English Standard. Those raisers who are breeding to the American Standard are promising themselves that they can breed out the green egg by strict selection. I do not say that this is utterly impossible, but any one knows that it must be a process of years. And, it has been my experience that when you breed out one characteristic of a cross, you breed out also others, in time, and get back very near to the original bird. In the case of the Runners, this would mean that those now breeding to American Standard would find themselves approaching more and more to the English Standard duck, as they cull out their green eggs for hatching.

Calling attention again to the fact that the ducks in the Australian competition were English Standard-bred Indian Runners, I will note a few statements that have been made as to laying capacity of the Indian Runners—the English Indian Runners, I mean. For, I do not think there is a certified record published for the American type. It will be noticed in practically all references to the laying capacity of the Runners, in this country, that little mention is made of the records made in the yards of the writers thereof. These figures are simply copied. A large proportion of all the figures given have come from across the water. One big record came from New Zealand; one came from Ireland; several came from Australia. I have two official records made in public work; also, one, made by Mr. De Courcy's ducks; one, made by English bred ducks of an American breeder; one, made in England by Mr. Thomlinson's ducks. The last-named record is 180, made in 1884. Mr Thomlinson states that he has had a few exceed this, in later years. The English-bred, American ducks made a record of 185. The Australian Competition, a public, official report from birds handled at an Agricultural College, was, for the last year, reported as an average of 200, without meat, and made by two pens.

Private claims, for which, so far as I know, no proof is shown, run winningly from 204 and 209 to 260, 280, and 288. Several breeders claim ducks having a record above 200; one states that his birds lay all winter, and one refers modestly to one of his ducks with a record of 200 eggs in nine and one-half months. This is only 21 a month; many Runners are fully equal to this, during the favorable months. The rub is to get it during December and the moulting period. The 288 record was made in England, and I do not know what proofs have been given as to its authenticity. But, at least, the "plain-clothes" men, (those who want the plain fawn and white demanded by the American Standard) cannot consistently claim it, as it was made by a "different" duck.



Off and on, for a year, I have been trying to get some verification of the record reported here in 1909 of 320 eggs from one Indian Runner duck. Just before this monograph goes to press, I am in receipt of a letter very much to the point. It is from James Sinclair, an English writer with whom I recently came into touch accidentally. He has made a tour around the world for the express purpose of studying progress in poultry culture. I have no permission to publish this letter, but I believe that I am not going beyond the bounds of courtesy in so doing, as no limitations have been laid upon me in any way. The testimony is as follows: "I had the pleasure of seeing the record duck while I was in New Zealand, as I went to see the plant of its owner. \* \* \* It is his 'Wonder' strain and laid 320 eggs in 365 days, and 512 eggs in 23 months, going through two complete moults. He had six 'Little Wonders,' bred from this one, entered in the Cambridge Laying Competition, which were only four and one-half to five and one-half months old when entered, and had gone through a complete moult. When I left, had put up the good total of 900 eggs in seven months, notwithstanding these obstacles; the last twelve weeks' totals averaging over thirty-nine."

This average means thirteen eggs per duck in each two weeks, for twelve weeks in succession. It is the Indian Runner Ducks' strongest bid for universal notice! Doubtless, the majority of people are unaware that Mr. I. K. Felch furnished a sworn record, some years ago, of a Light Brahma hen having laid 313 eggs in one year. I am certain that the average Indian Runner duck will come nearer her "Wonder" average than will any breed of hens to the "wonder" record for hens. I know of one published record for an American hen, higher than this duck record, but it was not a sworn record, as far as I know.

Straight to the point testimony from the people who are in the midst of the work, and who have to meet difficulties at every turn, is one of the most valuable things we can have to give light

on mooted points. Extracts from some other of the letters which have come to me during the last few months will show further how people regard the two types. The Vice-President of one of the poultry clubs writes: "Give the public what it wants and what is right, but do not try to educate it up to take only what we have to offer, because it is a fad. People want something that will reproduce itself, and the light fawn color won't do it. I don't think the new Standard, dirty white fawn will last."

From the far west, a man of convictions writes: "Throwing out the penciled type is an injustice to all its breeders as well as to the true breed; it is tearing down what we have been building up for years. Our ducks have won over all kinds of so-called Indian Runners, scoring to ninety-six and a half and ninety-six and three fourths at state shows. We have been breeding this English type for eight years, **and find no fault in them**: while the fawn and white proved worthless under the same conditions. Why should the Revision Committee wipe **either** the English type or the American type off the face of the American soil?" Please note that this letter was neither written for publication, nor for advertising, but is the outspoken expression of a man's belief, which he supports by his practice. He says, also, in the course of his letter, that the American type "has neither carriage nor egg-laying qualities."

If any are prompted to deny this last statement I refer them to an excerpt from a letter written from one of those Missouri men who never believe anything unless you can show them. He says: "I have some mongrels, this year's hatch, from stock claimed to score 96, and some have neither marking nor type. They are white and fawn, but color not distributed as it should be, and carriage little more erect than my Rouens. Have a neighbor who has had no better luck. The eggs were green."

The only man I happen to know of who has bred the Indian Runners continuously for more than a dozen years, Mr. Fay Davis,

of Flint, Mich., says: "It is a sorry fact to me to see the Standard makers try to spoil one of the utility points of the breed. I discarded, years ago, all my green egg type; now to go backward is a bitter pill to take."

Publicly, Mr. Davis has said: "I believe that every duck that lays a large, pure white egg shows, at certain seasons of the year, a certain amount of penciling, which is very marked when the feathers are new, and becomes fainter when the feathers grow older. In my estimation, this penciling adds to the beauty of the plumage."

Mrs. Brooks, who lives **for and with** her Runners, speaks with equal positiveness: "A prolific laying strain, producing large, white eggs, with solid, light fawn color, has never been produced, and, in my opinion, never will be, because it is contrary to nature."

Mr. Davis also states that he has spent twelve years in selection of ducks that lay pure white eggs with right cheek markings and correct shape, and refers to "the cinnamon-colored (the new 'fawn!') ducks that lay the dark eggs and that are incorrect in shape." Recently, on buying a pair of cinnamon-colored, light fawn, Standard ducks, he got the small, dark eggs again. Surely, this man's testimony ought to count very strongly. I have been able to get the names of only two other breeders who were handling Indian Runners in America at the time when he took them up. The testimony of a man who has held to them all through their trial in this country, is the best testimony that we can get. Mr. Davis adds that he has no trouble in selling all that himself and his customers can raise of the English, white-egg stock, and that he knows of no other fowl that can compare with them in profit. The knowledge of the man who has known both types since their beginnings with us, is the knowledge which ought to save us from making future mistakes.

## Selling and Cookery Value of INDIAN RUNNER EGGS

### CHAPTER V

There are three aspects under which eggs may be considered, viz., as breeding material; as market stock; as a household necessity and luxury. The last is the strong point, if we take numbers into consideration; yet, as the number of eggs produced depends quite largely, in some cases, upon the breeding value, it seems to me rather fitting to consider the eggs as breeding material, before taking up the other two points.

Indian Runner eggs, at their best, hatch better than any other eggs of which I have had personal knowledge, taking the season through. During the last hatching season, we had them running for a long time, under actual test, at from 95% to 100% fertile. One hundred per cent of fertility does not, necessarily, mean a one hundred per cent hatch. But it is known that duck eggs generally hatch well when all the conditions are favorable, as compared with hens' eggs. They need a little more moisture while under incubation, than do the better-known hens' eggs.

The real value of the Runner eggs, as breeding material, will rest very largely on the conditions under which the ducks are kept. In order to be able to hatch near the one hundred per cent which we take as ideal, and not impossible a part of the time) the conditions of yarding, feeding, etc., must also approach the ideal.



There must be fair room, proper proportion of males to females, sufficient shell material and grit, and plenty of fresh, lush green feed, besides the grain and meat, in various forms, which comprise the usual rations, not to mention the indispensable water to drink. It will not do to neglect any of these points, if one desires, or expects good hatches of good ducks.

There is, too, yet another point that needs consideration. I think breeders all through our land have been far too careless, in the past, as to the length of time eggs were kept before shipment. It is hardly fair to blame them harshly, because it has been widely published by the leaders that eggs would keep, with good care, from three weeks to a month, and still hatch reasonably well. Experiments at the Cornell Station show that this is a fallacy; that eggs hatch without loss from depreciation to any great extent, up to two weeks. After that time, they lose rapidly in value for hatching purposes.

I have known an early shipment of '200 hens' eggs, from one of the most prominent breeders, to give less than twenty chicks. There are two reasons which promptly present themselves, beyond the possibility of infertility: these are, possible chilling of many, and possible holding beyond the age when they were fit to ship. When eggs are scarce, the temptation to hold them longer than one would do later in the season, is strong, and it is buttressed by the known fact that they will keep longer in cold weather than during summer heat. The carriers, too, often put a shipper in the wrong: sometimes by careless handling, against which we are helpless, because we cannot prove it unless there is breakage; sometimes by undue delays on the road. Several times last season, I knew of shipments being twice and three times as long on the road as they should have been. One shipment which, had it been a passenger, would have gone through in 36 hours, was exactly a week on the road. A shipper has a right to calculate on prompt carriage, but

the carriers, by a delay like this, may hold his eggs beyond the period of value for hatching purposes. Breeders need to keep these points always in mind, and I think it is wise to err on the safe side, if any, in shipping any kind of duck eggs.

As market stock, the eggs of the Indian Runner have opened up possibilities never before ahead of us, at least, as far as we could know. They not only furnish the large sized product that everybody likes to buy, but, under favorable conditions, they can be produced more cheaply than the smaller hens' eggs. I do not, by any means, wish to tempt every one to take up ducks. There are some points about handling all ducks, especially in confinement, that do not commend themselves to the average person. Among these are the filth of their yards and the work of dressing the carcasses that must, eventually, go to market. The first of these can be overcome by proper management, on the right kind of location. Ducks can be kept, and do thoroughly well in confinement, but this makes more work for the handler, as a matter of course.

We have had Indian Runner ducks, raised wholly in confinement, begin to shell out the eggs while still just less than four and one-half months old. This was without any conscious effort to push them. It is not common to them to lay quite so early as this. But they do lay earlier than hens, comparatively speaking; they do lay more persistently; they do lay better in the autumn; they do make a higher record, on the average. When we add these items to the fact that they lay an egg exactly one-half larger than the standard of size for hens' eggs, and that the English type lay white, translucent eggs, it is easy to see that their value as producers of market eggs is abnormally high, as compared with anything yet known.

The eventual value of the green type egg turns entirely on the question as to whether or not a green egg will sell in the market. Possibly—a remote possibility, is it not?—possibly some one will

have business acumen and push sufficient to popularize the green egg just as some localities have popularized the brown egg of the Asiatics. But up to the present, it seems to be a fact that green eggs are little desired, except at Easter time, when the colored eggs have the right of way for a short period. This is not saying that they will not sell; I hold that a perfectly good food product in as good general demand as eggs, should always sell, if the producer have any skill at all in marketing. But I leave it to the good sense of the reader whether the Indian Runner, so prolific and quick maturing; so likely therefore, to increase remarkably fast, would not better think twice before she lays a green egg for the average buyer. For, it is the average buyer to whom we must cater, in all market offerings. We can educate him, but it is slow work, and it takes a skilled market man to do it.

When we come to the third point, the consideration of the Indian Runner egg as a household luxury, we can make out a tremendous case. For while this "luxury" delights the producer by selling at special seasons, occasionally, at twice the price of hens' eggs, it usually brings but five to ten cents more a dozen. The latter figure is proportionately cheaper for the consumer than hens' eggs, just as soon as the latter get above twenty cents. They fall below this figure so seldom nowadays, that it is safe to state that the ducks' eggs are always cheaper than hens' eggs, if only ten cents more a dozen. Two of these eggs will, at any time, take the place of three hens' eggs, even when the latter are fully up to the standard, market size, which is two ounces. No eggs were ever more delicately sweet than those of the Indian Runner; so that it may fairly be said that we shall soon have a luxury which is not extravagant, and which, it is hoped, may soon become plentiful on our markets. At the date of this writing, only a few favored buyers can have them, because there are not nearly enough to go around. The cities have hardly heard of the Indian Runner, as yet.

I am fortunate in being able to report a household test, made by Mrs. Grant M. Curtis, the editor of a Table Department in the "Reliable Poultry Journal." A breeder of the white-egg type, in western New York, sent to Mrs. Curtis's office some eggs for testing on all cookery points. The breeder's confidence in English type of Indian Runner as a winner was not misplaced. When the eggs were hard-boiled, or poached, the only fault that was found was that the whites were a little tougher than those of the hens' eggs, cooked in the same ways; but, the yolk was reported as smoother and richer tasting. Soft-boiled, and used as frosting, they were affirmed to be equally good with hens' eggs. In custards, two eggs to a quart of milk took the place of the five eggs the cook was wont to use, and "it was as delicious a custard as we ever tasted."

The lady who made these tests tried the eggs in making sponge cake, also, "believing that sponge cake is one of the most difficult cakes to make. Three eggs were used in the place of five with equally good results." The report closes: "We could not detect any unusual flavor in any of the eggs used, not even in the custard and cake. Having tested them, we should not hesitate to purchase such duck eggs. . . . in preference to hens' eggs, which are, alas, oftentimes so far below what should be standard size that we wish, with 'Uncle I. K.' that eggs were sold by the pound." As Mrs. Curtis acknowledged herself to have been, before this test, somewhat prejudiced against duck eggs, this may be regarded as a handsome **amende** to the Indian Runner.

Not enough eggs remained to try omelet making. If the experimenter could have tried it, she would have found that it is in this point that the Indian Runner eggs score most strongly, perhaps. They make a most delicious omelet, will bear more liquid than hens' eggs, for this use, and may be used with water, instead of milk, when necessity demands. The firmer white doubtless is

an advantage here, as the omelet is not so likely to fall, and some like it better with water than with milk, while the scalded milk is avoided in the case of the many invalids to whom milk seems to be poison.



## System and Forethought in MAKING A MARKET

### CHAPTER VI

Up to the time of the present writing, Indian Runner ducks have been kept so busy in supplying the demand for eggs for hatching, that they have not had time to "bother" with market eggs. The fact that the young grow to mature size in the short period of something like twelve weeks has made it possible to sell hatching eggs freely during two-thirds of the year, even to northern breeders, while those who want eggs to go south will take them at almost any time except in the very hottest months. Some do not even make this exception. A letter received late in November says: "I am filling some orders to southern customers. The half-Waltons are doing a good share of the laying." A note received in late October of this year from a well-known breeder, mentioned just having taken off a fine hatch of duckings from the incubators, and said that he was still hatching for himself every egg he could hold to. I do not think the later hatched birds ever attain such good size, but they help out while stock is still scarce. Among the early hatched birds, in our own yards, we frequently have males which go a half-pound above Standard weight.

Last year, a breeder told me that he filled one order for 5,000

eggs. Perhaps others fill even larger ones. But he was obliged to call on neighbor breeders for quite a proportion of his order; since it would take 250 ducks three weeks to lay 5,000 eggs, even if every duck laid every day, and every egg was perfect. This is, of course, beyond the limit of laying for any flock of domestic fowls of this size. Or virtually, for any flock.

“What sellers they are!” is a suggestive sentence regarding Indian Runners, from a private letter received here in October, 1910. This attribute has belonged to these ducks ever since I have known anything about them. The demand has snapped up,—usually before winter—all that could be raised, for breeding use; and even then it was not satisfied with the amount of the supply. This market, both for eggs and for stock has, in one sense, made itself.

But, in the future, as the farms work more into raising Indian Runners, there will need to be some systematic effort to make markets which will take all the supply at a satisfactory price. Considering the matter of price from the actual, intrinsic value, since the eggs of the Runner average to weigh one-half more than the standard, market hens’ egg, they should be worth one-half more. This must be discounted a little by the fact that “an egg’s an egg,” and, for strictly table use, three hens’ eggs will “go farther” than two ducks’ eggs (usually serving three persons,) though the eaters will not get the same amount of nutriment. There is also the old prejudice against ducks’ eggs to be reckoned with. Judging by intrinsic value alone, when hens’ eggs bring forty cents in a firm market, Indian Runner ducks’ eggs should be worth sixty cents. Whether we shall ever attain to this as a permanent standard of comparative values, I am unable to prophesy. At Easter, I think there will be no difficulty in doing it; at other times, until the market is firmly established, we may, perhaps, find it necessary to take a price from five to ten cents above the market price of hens’ eggs at any given time.

I know of one case in which the producer sold the output of eggs in Boston market at five cents a dozen more than for Leghorns' eggs, all through the spring and summer, though Boston is not a good market for ducks' eggs. In another instance, in New York market, a breeder sold Indian Runner eggs in crate lots, at 17c and upward, more than the going price for fine hens' eggs. This was at Easter time, and several years ago, even before all eggs were as high in price all the time as is now the case. I know, too, of a certain physician, practising in a small town, who recommended Indian Runner eggs for his patients, as preferable to hens' eggs. In that city, the Runner eggs have brought at least five cents more than hens' eggs, regularly, through some years and down to the present time. This does not seem enough, but when we remember that the Runners are more prolific than hens, that they lay during a longer average period, and that they will thrive on coarser feed, with less coddling, and with cheaper housing, the argument in favor of the Runners is pretty strong.

There is one point about selling which I want to make as emphatic as possible. This is: the sellers must ignore the prejudice against duck eggs—a relic of a careless age, or poorer ducks—except when obliged to meet it through the inquiry of a possible customer! Talk about the good qualities of the Runner eggs, and especially about their size and their sweetness. They have both, so that your arguments are ready for you in the goods you have to sell, regardless of the class of goods your grandfathers sold. If you have eggs enough to warrant it, put an advertisement into your town paper, offering eggs at a stated price, and telling the points in which they are **superior** to hens' eggs. When the people have read it times enough, they will believe it. This is the best way to make a market for any poultry products, if you have enough to make it an object. It costs very little, and it enables you to sell birds when they are ready, instead of holding the good till the

backward catch up, which they seldom really do. Besides, if you word your notices to that end, you are educating your possible customers up to your class of product, and when they want stuff, they will seek you.

While I do not, at present, urge that the Indian Runner be grown specifically as a market duck, our recent experience shows that it can be thus grown, and profitably so. We placed, in the village paper, a fifteen-word advertisement offering table ducks, at door, alive, at one dollar each. A single insertion sold all we had to spare, within two weeks. A little earlier, we made an opening into the trade of a high class city club, at the same price, dressed. It makes little difference as to the last, if one have the time for the work, as the feathers will more than pay for it. Inasmuch as ducks, like the commoner fowls, come about half males, there is always a surplus of these. There will also be a proportion of old ducks to work off, each year. I think it would be better, in general, to send these in one lot, to a city market.

Selling anything is a psychological experience. Many are good salesmen, because they have some natural keenness which enables them to go about it right. Experience may add much, also. And, because it is a psychological thing, it may be learned through a general study of psychology, the results of which will apply to every experience in business, social or family life. It sounds fearsome, but it is fascinating and practical.

For those who cannot help to **build up** a market, there are opportunities now which were never before offered. One eastern firm is offering, during the autumn of 1910, highest market rates on good poultry of all kinds, and furnishing coops, returning the price of coops when they reach the store with their consignment of poultry.

# The Indian Runners

## MAKING HISTORY

### CHAPTER VII

Nearly every mail brings inquiries as to the various types of Indian Runner, or recitals of experience with the breed in one type or the other. As to the birds themselves, I have little difficulty in replying to questions. As to origin, history, etc., the people who have the facts have varied in their willingness to let the public have them—at least through this medium; and it has had them through no other medium thus far. The public wants these facts and it wants them badly.

Several of the earlier breeders gave me all the help I asked. For this they have my hearty thanks, and I know that they will have that of the public which is interested in Indian Runners, as well. Others ignored my request, or answered far afield. To one breeder, I wrote thus: "Davis, of Michigan, tells me that you were one of the original breeders of Indian Runners. I want to find out just when they came into the United States and who imported them. Do you know who was the first, and whether or not the birds came from England? Also, how long ago? I see McGrew says little is known about them. I know what English breeders say, but it seems to me that it ought to be possible to find out



where United States breeders got them, and when the first were imported. It has been given out here that they came from the West Indies, which I do not at all believe, unless the two types which we are breeding at present in this country had a different origin entirely. Reply would very greatly assist," etc. All but one of these questions was ignored in the answer.

I had two ideas in mind in speaking of origin. The West Indian story, which I have refuted elsewhere, had gone all over the United States, and, having been credited to a reputable writer, who was a breeder of the Indian Runners before most of us had heard of them, it was quite generally accepted as fact; especially by those who did not know much about the duck in England, and what the best English breeders had to say about it. Moreover, England and the West Indies have had many dealings, throughout many years, and it was not an incredible story, in the light of possibilities, that our Indian Runners should have come to us, in part, at least, through the West Indies.

Aside from this, there was the possibility of different origins of different strains. Last winter, at the New York show, a man prominent in affecting the fate of Indian Runners in this country by his public acts, said, in my hearing, that it would be very easy indeed to reproduce the Indian Runners by the use of two or three of our earlier breeds,—at least as far as the solid fawn marking, on white was concerned. All breeders of fancy fowls know, after they have a little experience with breeding and exhibiting, that no man dare say what blood is in any one strain of birds of any breed, when it has been long out of the originator's hands. That "foreign" blood has been put into the Indian Runner of some strains, no breeder of experience and observation can fail to see. Indeed, it is usually admitted, in a general way, although no one confesses to having introduced such blood. When a bird which, in its purity, should stand very erect, degenerates into a logy, heavy bird which

it is very difficult to breed out of the horizontal carriage, there is a reason—with apologies to the owners (?) of this clause! And every experienced breeder knows in a general way what that reason is. When a bird that is, in its purity, rather definitely and strongly marked with a dark color, throws a large number of white specimens, as many complainants affirm that the “fawn” Indian Runners do, there is white blood back of it somewhere. White will not prevail so widely in the face of man’s continual selection of the other sort, unless man has made the mistake of adding more white, and so has strengthened it.

I saw some fine Indian Runners in another state, in the fall of 1910, bred from “Walton” stock. They were excellent in shape and beautiful in color. I judged that the importer was trying to breed on this stock to get shape and carriage, and up through it to the American Standard. This would be the one best way out of the difficulty, if it were feasible. But, when a judge of National reputation assures you that it is folly to try to do this, and that the true way is to buy of the men who now have birds nearest to the American Standard, you want to know “Why?” And you make your question mark very large.

The fancier would not be unduly dependent on the Standard, if he could depend on it not to change just as he got somewhere near its demands. And, when the Association makes a mistake it is almost in honor bound to stand by it, or to recede from the point gradually, for the sake of those who have done its bidding, and bred to the false ideal. Nor can it afford, from one point of view, to admit that it has made a mistake, although many of its members will admit this personally. But the farmer must take what the fancier hands down to him, if he wants anything new in the way of a breed, and while the association helps him on one hand, it injures him on the other.

On the day before I write this chapter, a letter came in the

morning mail, from one of a firm of farmers who evidently want to grow up into fanciers, but can by no means afford to ignore the utility side of breeding. The letter said: "I have some good Indian Runners, and want to keep only the best. However, my best ducks I cannot take to the Fairs, as they are too dark. Yet, they produce the eggs we prefer,—the white ones." But this man is not so badly off as is the one who wants to raise Runners solely for the eggs, when such a one chances to get his stock from a breeder of the solid fawns. If he gets from these a large proportion of green eggs, he is disappointed, disgusted, discouraged, and can get no redress.

On the day previous to the receipt of the above mentioned letter, I received another inquiring about the white-egg sort, and saying: "I have some of the green-egg kind, but am not satisfied with the color of the eggs." A large breeder wrote me, the same week: "An inquirer, an M. D., writes to know if I will sell ducks guaranteed to lay white eggs or money refunded; that he would not have layers of green eggs at any price, nor as a gift; that he would hardly eat them if well-cooked." Of course, this is largely a matter of personal whim, as far as not eating a green-shelled egg is concerned. But we need to remember that the great bulk of the Indian Runner eggs must shortly be sold to the public at large, few of whom lack personal whims, of one sort or another. It is our business to humor those whims just as far as we may. And we know that the people of much of our country have been taught to demand white eggs; whether it be a whim, or not, does not affect the fact with regard to the call for white eggs.

A Texas rancher who thought to take Fortune by the top-knot, as it were, and haul her into his service, wrote as follows: "The penciled ducks are better than I thought. I thought I would order several pens from different parties and stock up on the best. My only wish is that I had bought all penciled Runners." The



Much enlarged to show the delicate Lacing, which does not appear in any ordinary photograph. Bred to English Standard, but rather full in breast.

QUOTATION: "The two varieties (American and English types) have the same style of carriage. \* \* \* All the difference is in color of plumage." ( ——— )  
Compare the types on these opposite pages and see if you agree with him !  
A poor cut, but a good bird.



Indian Runner Males, American Standard, of the best thus far produced. One a winner of first in one of the best Shows.



ducks had converted the rancher to the penciled type, before they had time to lay an egg for him. The solid fawn is so handsome, in the best specimens, that I should hardly expect such sudden conversion, but I have the buyer's own testimony, in writing, as to the fact.

One or two letters which I have in hand are so bitter in expressing an opinion about the matter of change of type that I do not think it wise to publish them, even without signatures. One breeder, in especial, stated with hot comment, that he would hold to the genuine type, even if they should be disqualified by the American Committee, in the revision of the Standard.

One letter, from an inquirer not at all familiar with the Indian Runner, asks many questions. Among others, "Are they hardy?" The descriptive adjective "hardy" usually appears in any recital of the virtues of these ducks, but no one has enlarged upon it, to my knowledge. When people ask such a question as this, I immediately wonder what they mean by "hardy." Able to withstand snow? Cutting winds? Dampness? Extreme cold? What is "extreme"? We have the light winters of the south, and the 40-degrees-below-zero of the northwest. Which of these is the fair test? Or is it a point in between? I can testify to the limit of six below zero. I have seen Indian Runners, just maturing, running in the open, in December's bitter days, with not a bit of shelter but some small coops, which they ignored. The yards were strongly wind-swept, and the birds were out all night as well as all day. They sat on their feet, and hid their heads in their ruffs, when it was coldest, and especially during cutting winds. No one with any experience with fowls would expect eggs under such conditions, of course. But the ducks were doing well enough otherwise, and happy as larks, even on the snow, as soon as it began to thaw. I judge them to be hardier in some respects than any breed of hens I have had experience with—and that is a great many.

“They do not require any shelter after they are grown,” is the testimony of another breeder. Nevertheless, all who expect to get eggs at the north in the colder months must provide shelter, and see that the birds do not stay much in cutting wind. Too close shelter is not desirable, especially for breeding stock.

All poultry yards, whether for hens or other birds, should have shelter on the sides toward the prevailing winds; this is only common-sense. Hedging, shrubbery, low-branching trees—any of these may afford the shelter needed. I think there is no doubt that the Runners would prefer a shelter consisting only of a roof, with thickly-branched shrubs for one or two sides; for they are very suspicious, and are much wilder when enclosed than when free to go about. Whether this would be warm enough to permit laying, I am not sure; think it doubtful, at least in the three worst months. The breeders who report that their birds lay “remarkably well” during the winter probably do not house them on the hither side of an iceberg; though even that would be more comfortable, it may be, than an open sweep of cutting winds. Think a minute! Even inside your dwellings, unless very warmly built, a keen gale will make forty degrees difference next to the windward sides. How much more bitter will it be outside!

I see that one enthusiast says that hotels and restaurants will not use any other sort of eggs if they can get Indian Runner duck eggs. There is good sense behind the statement—regarding it rather as a prophecy—because these are the places that must often consider quantity; and in any table portion where eggs enter in as quantity, and not as eggs in natural form, two duck eggs will always take the place of three hens’ eggs, so that these caterers need but pay for eight, instead of a dozen, to do the same work.

As to the horde of bakers who are said to have been using rotten eggs lately, the Indian Runner breeder looks for no custom from them. He will prefer to stick to the hotels and restaurants

which "will not use any other kind" but big, sweet Indian Runner eggs.

Messrs. M. and S., Indian Runner breeders of the middle-west, both of whom have kept both types of Indian Runner, testify to their experiences on the same page of a 1910 number of one of our poultry papers. Mr. S. states that he can find no difference in the laying quality of the two types, but refers to the tendency of the laced birds toward a dark head and rump, as a defect. But, this is exactly what the Standard they are bred to demands them to have.

Mr. M. on the contrary, says that the laced birds are superior to the solid fawn sort in hardiness, and in the "production of more and larger white-shelled eggs." He also says that when the Indian Runner comes to be bred for market eggs mainly, "you must have a supply of large, white eggs to please the trade and obtain the highest price." Ten times its weight within the year, is what he avers that laced ducks of this breed, properly handled, will produce. He bases his preference fundamentally on the fact that the laced birds are the stronger birds and the better layers.

Mr. S. again, finds the solid colored birds easier to breed to Standard requirements, and thinks this is a virtue; while Mr. M. reiterates that it is the largest amount of white-shelled eggs that the people want, and thus stands for the English-bred penciled birds. These, he breeds largely, and sells at good prices.

If I have not, on the other pages of this book, made it sufficiently clear that I have no wish to coerce the fancier who likes the fawn and white birds into raising anything else, I want to do so now. But, I have seen his birds where he shows his best. I know them to be inferior to the original type in several respects, because he has too far ignored true type, in a craze for a certain color. In doing this, as all know, he breaks, like many other breeders, a fundamental rule of the law-giving Association. But what

of that? Is he not a fancier, and may he not do **as he fancies?**

Neither, for any cause, would I put a handsome bird out of existence; but I certainly would oppose her shoving aside the real claimant to honors; especially when it means that many a farmer, caught by the name and the fame of the "Indian Runner" will be deluded into buying the green-egg "solid fawn" type, only to "tear his hair" when these birds begin to lay.

I first took this breed up to test it for the benefit of the thousands of readers of a prominent farm paper. I found it better than I expected, and I found many more people interested than I had looked to see. It is because of these people, and many others like them, who will in the future want to know as much as possible about the Indian Runners, that I have ventured to differ from that great and wise body, the American Poultry Association, and many of the good fanciers who compose it and to make that difference public, so that well-informed buyers may know what they are doing.

## Best All-Around Handling of THE BREEDING STOCK

### CHAPTER VIII

There is a knack about the handling of ducks which has to be learned. It is fortunate that it can be learned quite readily from the literature. Much of it lies in knowing just where ducks differ from hens, in their requirements. The love of ducks for the water is well known, and the very fact that they fall in the "Water Fowl" class affirms it.

Still, it is very difficult to some to realize that ducks always need drinking water before they need feed; and, on the other hand, it is difficult to realize that ducks can be raised virtually as land birds, with no water but that which a tub may hold; and that, if they have good grass range, they will not seem to suffer material deterioration. It is, of course, much harder to raise yarded ducks without running water, since they love to play in water, will waste much that is provided for them, and cannot be neglected in this matter. If they are without drinking water a single half hour, they become uneasy, noisy, and obtrusive of their sufferings. In small quarters, ducks are said to be, in general, the most easily



managed of all domestic fowls; (some say, the most profitable, also.) I saw an instance of this, as far as it relates to housing, which was a revelation as to the easy adaptability of ducks to the conditions which they must needs meet. The duck shelter to which I refer was just a one-room, dirt-floor, double-pitch arrangement, the upper half of the usual siding being replaced by wire netting. The floor measurement may have been ten by twelve feet. Through the center, lengthwise, nearly the whole length, ran an alley. At one end and on the sides of this alley, were, I think, seven pens for ducks. The cat was not there to be "swung," but I am sure there was not room in any one of these divisions. Yet, the ducks seemed to be doing well enough. The matter that saved the situation was that the shelter stood at the head of a steep slope, and there was running water at the bottom to which the mature birds had continual access. Such confined quarters ("sevenths," rather) are not to be advised; but the story shows how especial care in one direction may offset, when necessary, some neglect or lack in another.

Duck houses are of the simplest construction, and about the only need is a roof with three or four walls, and some rather deep, clean litter. Many times, they prefer to sit out, entirely exposed to the weather. But this is a matter which affects their breeding value much, in some seasons. A valuable breeding bird requires comfort, and if she have not a comfortable shelter and warm litter, many of her eggs will be wasted through chilling, during the early part of the year. One should not forget that, although ducks are water fowl, they need dry shelters and drained soil, at least near their sleeping place. I have seen ordinary puddle ducks, probably once kin to the Rouen aristocracy, sit all night in the dead of winter on a pond, just where it was fed from a living spring. But these ducks were not expected to lay until March.

## MAKING A VIGOROUS BREEDER

The foregoing remarks indicate the general handling which goes to the making of a vigorous breeder, or a vigorous layer. The market duck is handled differently while growing, especially in the matter of feed. The very sweeping statement has been made that there is only one duck for profit, as that one is so far superior to all the others. But this statement was penned eleven years ago, when the very name of Indian Runner was practically unknown in this country. More recently, an extensive grower of the big, market ducks has told me that, in his opinion, there would never be any market for the Indian Runner. Fortunately growers of Indian Runners are disproving this to some extent, although at the present writing, these ducks are unknown to the majority, probably, of city commission men. Indeed, in New York City itself, I have found only one firm familiar with the Indian Runner by name. The author of "Poultry Craft" says that **exclusive** duck farming can be made profitable only near a large city, where there is a good demand for ducks; a few ducks, he admits, can be grown profitably almost anywhere. The same author says that, on large plants, the estimated cost of growing is up to eight cents a pound, and that special duck farmers would soon have to go out of business through the very fouling of the soil, and its consequent unhealthfulness, did they not use the latter part of the summer season in making it sanitary through the use of growing crops.

Fortunately, the Indian Runner can make good so fully in a single, special line, that of egg production the year around, that we scarcely need to listen to the market men, no matter what they have to say about real, market ducks. The Runner breeders will have only to dispose of their worn-out layers, and the Runners lay well until several years old, according to testimony.

The feed, then, will not be that of the market duck, but that of the breeder and layer. One part green food to two parts

grain mixture is the general rule to produce a well-framed duck. All will be fed on this basis till, possibly eight weeks old. After this, the market ducks needs more corn in some form. The stock to be grown on is kept on about the same ration right along till it is time for laying to begin. It is understood that meat is always fed after the ducklings are a few days or a week old, the amount being increased as the birds get larger. Ten per cent is about the average given to the ducks well started, which is sometimes increased to twelve per cent just before fattening time, if they are to go to market.

If a single article of food were to be mentioned as of more value to duck breeders than any other, doubtless it would be bran. Bran, however, differs, in these times, from the older mill product, and modern brans are not all alike. I wish to impress especially the need of securing a good grade of feeding stuffs for ducks. Tainted meat, or moldy ground stuff will work quick havoc with ducklings, at almost any age. Some time ago, a correspondent wrote to inquire what could be done for the ducklings, which had suddenly begun to die by the score and almost by the hundred. Every possible point of failure was canvassed, but handling seemed to be correct upon all, till we came to the question of spoiled feed. Then it came out that a mill which had been relied upon, was putting out a product made from grains that had virtually become rotted in the fields.

Ducks have a desirable quality in the fact that they will not eat when really sick, and thus they have some chance to recover. The universal testimony is that a duck well-hatched is as good as raised, after one gets the knack, and the chief difficulty in raising ducks inheres in their greedy desire to gorge themselves, combined with neglect, by their owner, to make sure that they always have water to help them at this weak point. Dry feed and withheld water are the duck's worst combination foe. Considerable can be

done to ward off trouble by soaking the cracked corn which is used, for an hour or so before feeding it. (The only point to watch out against is letting it ferment in extreme warm weather.) Being then swollen before it is eaten, it will not make trouble by swelling after being eaten. The duck has no crop proper, like the hen. The feed is passed into the stomach, and thence through the other organs of digestion. The duckling eats eagerly and often. This is, no doubt, the chief reason why it does not do to use too much hard, dry grain, or to omit water at any time. We have found much satisfaction in feeding stale bread soaked in milk, in connection with bran, for the first few weeks. Cracked corn is used for one meal a day, and clover, cut sweet-corn stalks, grass, rape, weeds, cabbage, beet pulp and other things that may be handy, help out the growers who may not have grass range.

The matter of shade is one which must never be overlooked. I have seen, on farms where there was abundance of delightful shade, both duck and chicken coops located out in the open, under a broiling July or August sun. At the same time, the shallow water dishes were entirely dry, it might be for hours. Such ducks and chickens are pre-destined to die of mysterious (?) causes, and none can ward this off till shade and water become a part of the constant conditions under which they grow. Ducks are very sensitive to the heat of summer suns, and I have seen even the less sensitive chickens thrown into convulsions or limberneck during the awful heat of midsummer conditions without shade. The best of things can, however, be overdone. The one safe way is to make both shade and sunshine free to the younglings, and let them choose for themselves which they will take at any one time. It is not necessary, as one breeder did, when told to provide shade, to coop the ducks so that they could not get from under the dense shade of an overhead grape arbor. Even summer days vary much, and summer nights become as cold as autumn, at times. I have worn

mitten on the fourth of July, and even then suffered with the cold, in New York state. An exception, of course; but one never knows when an exception may arise. Forethought is one's best defence, and must be a continual part of the poultryman's panoply.

It is altogether better to feed and water outside the shelters, except under very unusual conditions. All who keep ducks under conditions which require yarding, make much use of small grit, and many use charcoal also, at least, occasionally. Charcoal is especially good in the case of trouble with indigestion. But, inasmuch as the old saw about locking the barn after the horse is stolen applies with great force to ducks, the wise duck grower studies his conditions carefully, and so plans as to render impossible, those things which are likely to make trouble in the duck yard.

One careful grower known to me who would by no means be caught napping about anything in the regular preventive line, has lost a large bunch of ducks through hunters; another, through the ducklings having eaten rose beetles.

The sexes are usually about equally represented in the young stock. Occasionally, a freakish hatch may be very unequal. One buyer, in 1910, reported one duck and nine drakes raised from one setting of eggs; while another, more under fortune's care, apparently, reports, on the very morning when I am writing this chapter, three drakes to nine ducks.

One breeder suggests that beginners could more easily enter upon poultry culture with Indian Runners than with any variety of hens, because they "would meet with but few of the vexing problems and setbacks that would fall to their lot if they tackled chickens." The first requisite in handling, he says, is to get pure-bred Runners, "free from crossing with Pekin and other ducks."

To speak definitely of our own experience, I may say that we have hatched and raised our Runners entirely with hens. Early in the season, I give not more than nine eggs to a hen. This is equal



to 13 hens' eggs. A nest with a sod or earth bottom is best. The eggs are supposed to hatch in 28 days, but I have had a brood all out and in the coop before the end of the 28th day. The ducklings require little feed the first day or two. I do not try to feed them till they begin to look for it, for they do not need it earlier. They should have water in a shallow dish so that they cannot get wet in it, and this means refilling it often. The first feed is stale bread soaked in sweet milk. If I couldn't get this, I think, from my present knowledge, I might feed Spratt's Duck feed, just at first. After a very few days, I add to the soaked bread a little bran and middlings, a little ground corn and oats with the hulls sifted out, and some clean sand or fine grit. Just as soon as they will eat it, I work in succulent feed in the way of chopped cabbage, lettuce, rape or similar greens. If the green juicy stuff is not available, scalded cut clover is excellent. But something of this character is imperative for ducks, unless they have abundant good pasturage. I feed five times daily for the first few weeks, and mix in a little sand once daily. At least one feed is of green stuff. After a few days, I add a little good beef scrap; the less milk the more scrap. Don't use scrap that smells like fertilizer. And be sure all feed is sound and sweet. If the milk sours, I would make it into curds and mix with the other ingredients, and use a little more bran in proportion.

The ducklings are very sensitive to cold and wet for the first few days of their lives. They must have protection from storms till they are feathered. I have found them so nearly drowned by a sudden, hard shower that reviving them seemed hopeless. But drying and warming them by the kitchen range put renewed life into the chilled bodies, and they seemed none the worse for the wetting. Their recuperative powers seem to be great. They will reach the point where they do not need the hen sooner than will chicks. But they should always have some shelter to which they can retreat. An open shed seems to suit them admirably.



Nestlings, from Indian Runners bred to English Standard.

A shed-like house, situated on sloping land, usually open to the sun, but planned to close at night when necessary and having good litter, about covers the real needs, as to shelter, for the breeding ducks, or the layers.

Concerning the most deeply interesting point, as to how freely the Indian Runners will lay in the "off" season for hens' eggs, testimony varies so much as to convince me that it is quite a matter of handling.

Mrs. Harshbarger's ducks lay during the moulting season, and on into the extreme cold months. She reports 75% of them laying by February 1. She states that her (large) flock averaged 9 eggs per duck in 108 days; also, that the eggs laid during the five poorer months of the year will "more than pay all expenses of feed, shipping baskets, printing and advertising for the entire year."

Mrs. Brooks's birds lay during the moult (to a lesser extent than in spring, of course) and she ships eggs for hatching in November, the sparsest month of the year for hens' eggs. One breeder, writing in November, says: "Every mail brings reports of ducks from my eggs laying."

Judge Clipp says that he sees duck eggs in the exhibition coops of the Runners at midwinter (even after trying shipments). The early hatched may begin to lay in July, and "anybody's" will lay in February. Mr. Hurt says that the very slender neck, long, thin body and alert carriage characterize **the best layers**. "The White Queen," the best bird I have seen in America, as regards genuine type, may well serve as a model for those who would fix the correct type firmly in mind. Compare her with Walton's ideal sketches, published in this country in May, 1910, and see how little she lacks of meeting them. She is, in fact, far more beautiful.

Having a good, laying type, one needs to provide comfortable housing at night, a spot sheltered from winds during the day, and

liberal rations, with a goodly proportion of meat. This sums up the matter of the egg harvest.

I must not, however, leave any one with the impression that only one method of feeding will do for Indian Runner Ducks, or other ducks. The methods most commonly recommended in handling ducks have been gleaned chiefly from the handling of the men who raise them commercially, for the sake of the carcass. They are the methods of those who yard their ducks, and push them almost beyond reason when they are to go to market early.

On the farm, especially where there is abundant room and natural water privileges, one may do differently. I am accustomed to a rough mental grouping of feeds which is easily possible to any feeder. It includes the starchy feeds, which are heat and fat makers, (including fats themselves with the fat makers, at a higher value); the muscle and egg makers form my second group; the green feeds, clover meals, vegetables, form the third. If birds are on free, good range, we need not think much about this third class. If not, we must make much of it, and use its members in large proportion. We must remember that grass is not the same as hay, because it is so largely water. Proportions may be roughly in one's mind, something like one part of muscle-makers to two of fat and six or seven of the starchy things (which means, mostly, the grains in their natural state, unground and undivided as to food values). To produce eggs, one adds a larger proportion of the muscle-makers, like peas, beans, meat, etc. This is all that is necessary for a feeder to know, except whether any special feed ranks high as a muscle-maker or a fat maker. It is really the base of that far more elaborate thing called "scientific feeding".

A very practical difficulty which meets the handlers of laying ducks is that, in mid-winter, the ducks, being largely night layers, must be in reasonably warm quarters, or the eggs will freeze. Breed-ers of ducks especially noted for laying should, therefore, plan for

warmer housing than others find necessary. This does not mean that they must provide close, stuffy houses, for these will not work for the good health and vigor of the stock. The best thing any one can do to make his shelters warm for stock of any kind is to locate them where they are sheltered from wind. The closer they are to shelter on the windward side, the warmer they will be. A second good aid toward the needed warmth for laying ducks, is deep, soft litter. If this occupies only such portion of the floor as will accommodate the inmates comfortably, they will group themselves there; as they are very partial to a nice bed. Thus, their bodies will keep the eggs warm, and early rising on the part of the handler will do the rest.

The one who handles our ducks recently planned some very simple houses, which have been put up experimentally. They are really only deep sheds, being six feet on the front and 12 feet deep. The height at the front is six and one-half feet, and at the back it drops to 40 inches. The houses are boarded closely, and covered both on roof and sides with one of the commercial roofings. The front is entirely filled by two curtains which drop against the strip binding the house in front, and which open flat against the roof whenever desirable. The more they are up, the better for the birds.

This house has been planned to meet several difficulties which experience showed. The door is on the side, rather close to the front. It is double, having an outer solid shutter and an inner frame covered with wire netting. The depth of the house is to permit the easy handling of litter which I mentioned; to allow, also, feeding near the front on stormy days, and to protect from inblowing wet and snow. The curtains are of cheap muslin. A man who had used duck, which used to be so much recommended, told me that he thought the muslin much better. The duck does not permit sufficient influx of air, he said. Were it not for the color and weight, which darken the inner house somewhat, I should use loose bagging, nearly always available on the farm at no cost. We do use it wherever possible.



Ever since I have taken a special interest in poultry, Mr. Hunter has been trying to drum it into the heads of all whom it may concern that the three points necessary to winter eggs are early hatching, good "growing" and pullets for a stand-by. In similar way, I might make three points for ducks; early hatching, proper feeding, comfortable housing. Without all these the duck will not give returns in winter. The very word, "returns" points to the fact that she must RECEIVE first. Let no breeder forget this.

Even when she has given her returns in eggs, it yet remains for her owner so to educate or to select his market that the cash returns shall be of the best. This matter is one in which our southern people should be especially interested, as they have the best chance, on account of their climate. In March, 1910, a produce reporting paper gave 22 and one-half to 23 cents as the lowest price for hen's eggs, reached up to the date of report, during that season. On the same date it was reported that duck eggs were beginning to move, toward the New York market. They were classed as "Baltimore" eggs, though some came from Tennessees "and other western points." Baltimore duck eggs were reported as bringing 42c. at the same time that hens' eggs were bringing a cent or two more than ONE-HALF this price. When we have actual market reports showing what is possible in the line of returns from duck eggs, at least during a portion of the season, we do not need to guess. And I note that southern inquirers are plentiful, and eager. Europe sent us a good many cases of eggs last year. Shall we not rather raise our own? I note in certain market news that prices drop to "almost one half" on duck eggs, after Easter. But, if this one-half is even then equal to the price of hens' eggs, no need complain very bitterly. The market for duck eggs has to work itself out, but it seems to be doing very well at present. And I think it may be expected to improve steadily, once the Indian Runner eggs become known in city markets. Ignorant old New York will get them after a little, and LEARN SOMETHING TO HER ADVANTAGE!

# Some Spurious and Some GENUINE INDIAN RUNNERS

## CHAPTER IX

**By Mrs. Andrew Brooks.**

[Mrs. Brooks is the friend of the Indian Runner. She lives on a farm and knows farm needs, and she is a true fancier. She has done such valiant work in trying to preserve what she believes to be the only "true" Indian Runners, and to introduce them here because of their economic value, that we have asked her to write something of her views of our monograph. C. S. V.]

As Indian Runners have been in this country only a few years, and an unjust and misfit Standard of so-called "Perfection" was made for the breed, practically disqualifying true Runners and standardizing mongrels, the present mixed and confusing state of affairs is not surprising.

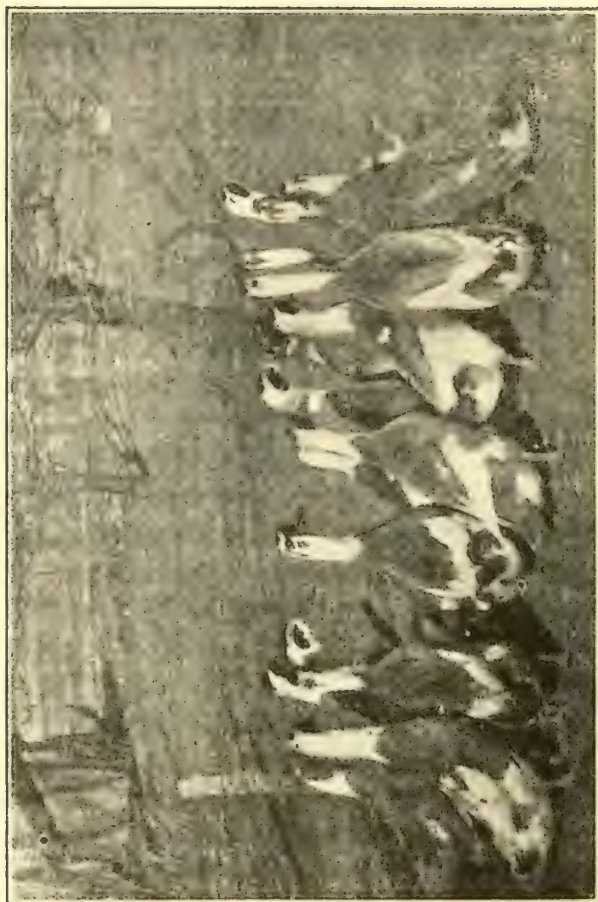
In making a standard, attention should be paid to nature's laws. This was not done. It is an established fact that the natural colors of Indian Runners are fawn and white, the female having penciled plumage, while the drakes have cap and cheek markings of dull, bronzy green with rumps bronzy black or brown, turning dark brown or fawn when coat is old (the shade depending upon

the length of time that has elapsed since the molt, but never the same as body color). The American Standard has demanded the same color in both sexes, namely, "light fawn," even throughout. Such a standard places a premium on faking: blood foreign to the breed was bred in to secure light fawn color with no penciling on plumage of females and drakes having head and rump markings the same as the body color. As would be expected, this addition of foreign blood has brought about grave structural changes, altered the color of the eyes, also the color and size of the eggs, besides lessening the number of eggs. The chief value of the Indian Runners lies in their capacity to be veritable egg-factories of large, white, marketable eggs. As layers of such eggs, and as foragers, the Standard hit them hardest, requiring wrong position of legs, destroying the characteristic Runner gait and making less able foragers of them. The new Standard may possibly be an improvement over the old one in some respects, but I understand that it demands the **brown eyes**, which have been acquired in making over the breed to conform to standard requirements, and to produce the required color of plumage. A shade in color of feathers would not much matter but it should not be gained at the sacrifice of utility value. Longfellow in *The Builders* said:

"Nothing useless is or low  
Each thing in its place is best;  
And what seems but idle show  
Strengthens and supports the rest."

This applies to fancy and commercial poultry; for, it should be remembered that the whole poultry industry is a structure resting upon the "firm and ample" foundations of economic value. If we tear this down and destroy utility, how long will the industry survive?

I have had much correspondence with Indian Runner breeders in all parts of the United States and all their testimony proves



A New Jersey flock of 'half-Walton' breeding. Bred to English Standard.

the same thing, viz., that eggs from the light fawn American Standard-bred ducks are laid in fewer numbers; such stock does not begin to lay so early in the season by some weeks; also ceases laying earlier in the fall: while true Runners do not cease entirely, even during the moult, as I can testify from experience. A worse fault, in the light fawn ducks, is that they mostly lay green or tinted eggs of smaller size, that do not sell for so much. Our best markets call for white eggs, and owing to their mixed parentage these light fawns cannot reproduce themselves reliably. All my correspondents tell the same story of sending for eggs at high prices (naming the most prominent breeders;) of getting green or tinted or mixed colors of eggs that produce ducklings which show lack of uniformity, some being mostly yellow, some light and some dark. One man wrote: "I want to acquire a flock of genuine English Runners that will be second to none. I have had enough of mongrels...I want a duck that will lay white eggs and plenty of them and reproduce themselves in type and markings, instead of the young looking like they were the result of mixing half a dozen widely different breeds. I'm sick and disgusted with my humiliating experience with Standard Indian Runners. I have them that were hatched from eggs from ducks claimed to score 96 points and there is not one closer to the Indian Runner Standard than is a Rouen." Another, late in the season said he had spent weeks in trying to find eggs from flocks guaranteed to lay only white eggs and had not discovered **one** such flock. He judged by the discussion which he read in the papers about the Standard that I must have them, and added: "For heaven's sake don't say you have all the orders you can fill." One inquirer asks: "Will you furnish ducks that are guaranteed to lay white eggs only, or money refunded?" It is a significant fact that most of such inquiries come from the midst of the country where the light fawns are most extensively bred. Another writer, who met with disappointment



in trying to breed the American Standard, wrote of buying the highest priced birds the most prominent "light fawn" breeder would sell, keeping them side by side with real Runners with the same care and feeding, only to find that they were not so valuable as the ducks they were trying to displace, as they were so much poorer layers, and of tinted eggs. Hundreds of ducks laying green or tinted eggs are kept in some flocks. The eggs are scattered broadcast all over the country to purchasers who believe that they are buying Runners, innocently supposing that "Runners are Runners," and not knowing that there are imitations of the real article, which are sold as genuine. This is only a faint picture of the situation. No wonder that true Runners are scarce and high priced.

Who can count the cost of the harm done? It is beyond computation. The fancy and the utility should go together, but as matters now stand prospective buyers will have to decide whether they will breed for show and fancy requirements or whether they want the most valuable, practical duck from the utility point of view, the ones giving best money value. For us, we will concede Standard excellence (?) to the fanciers; they are welcome to the duck they have created! Theirs will answer for exhibition purposes, as judges must place awards according to Standard. We will concern ourselves with maintaining the breed in its highest type and purity for the farmer and utility breeder. Runners are pre-eminently the farmers' breed. They are at their best on the free range of the farms, as they get along with less care than hens. They are what the farmers need in these days of high priced labor. Runners will lay as many eggs as the best breeds of hens. No other breed of ducks will lay so many white eggs; none are such foragers, or so capable of gaining a large share of their living, thus reducing the cost of feed, and they adapt themselves well to adverse conditions. In the eighth annual Australian Laying compe-

tion two pens of Runners averaged above 200 eggs each. As no meat was obtainable, no animal food was fed in their ration during the time of the test. What hens fed in like manner could have made so good a showing? Meat or animal food is even more necessary for ducks than for hens. When given free range they find much of it for themselves, working as they do, busy as bees from morning till late at night (stormy days the same or more so) thrusting their bills deep into the grass, searching for worms or insects. Nothing escapes their notice! A farmer who is a near neighbor of ours has six Runners, yearlings. Now, in the latter part of November he is receiving 4 or 5 eggs every day and feeds them only corn; no mash at all. As they have free range, I suppose they balance their own ration. They are kept dry-bedded at night: the first essential in raising ducks. Early hatched young ducks or yearlings, or older birds, if managed right, will lay as well or better than hens, in the fall when prices are high and eggs most appreciated. I know personally that, with such care as the average farmer can give, they will give flock averages of 150 eggs each in a year. The results of the annual duck laying competitions in Australia are very interesting and instructive, but I am not so much concerned with the records of such tests or the records of individual layers, as I am in the flock averages of these ducks, when well managed on the free range of the farms or in the hands of the utility poultry breeder. The labor question is getting to be a serious one, but the ducks help to solve it, as they are more easily cared for than hens. They are not troubled with lice nor mites, so that there are no houses to spray nor roosts to grease, no frozen combs to treat, no dropping boards to scrape off, no scratching up of gardens nor flying into grain bins. Nor is there need for so many males as are needed with the larger breeds: one male being sufficient for ten or more females on free range. They can be housed very cheaply; fences cost less when the ducks have to be yarded, as low

fences will hold them; when matured, they eat no more than hens. It is also less work to raise the young stock since they grow up so quickly. The young ones may be brought into laying at five months of age, and eggs sell for more than hens' eggs. As the call has been so great for hatching eggs I sell at market only a portion of the time, but I have sold enough to know that eggs will sell for five to six cents per dozen more than hens' eggs. Have shipped to a commission dealer in New York for the month before Easter when I received from 18 to 20 cents per dozen more than I received for hens' eggs. I learned that after Easter commission men pay a premium of five cents per dozen more than they pay for Leghorn eggs. They may be packed in one side of case by themselves if there are not sufficient to fill the case.

Runners are so valuable for layers that they are not sold to any extent at market for the table. But the surplus males find sale at good prices, the meat being so tender and delicious. It is really in a class by itself, as it has such rich, gamy flavor. Since they grow up so quickly and cost less to feed than Pekins there is no reason why enterprising poultrymen cannot build up a good trade for them as market ducks.

# The Future of the INDIAN RUNNERS IN AMERICA

## CHAPTER X

There is no question, I think, that at the present writing, (after the last meeting of the Revision Committee in 1910), the majority of the fanciers of the country favor the plain, fawn type that has been convicted of laying so many green eggs (showing impurity, Mr. Jaeger says!) It could hardly be otherwise, indeed, since the Standard has demanded for some years back, that only such birds should be bred. Of course, all but the independent thinkers followed like sheep, whatever the Standard demanded, whether it meant a good Indian Runner, or not. And, I have no doubt that most of them have taught themselves to admire the plain feathers most, in the Indian Runner, even if they did not do so at first. Yet, the very same breeders would go into raptures over a Cornish Indian hen if she showed extra good penciling! Many of these breeders are so inconsistent as to argue for the greater beauty of the plain Runner, when it is a well-known fact that pencilings, lacings, and the like have given all the more distinctive beauty to our wonderfully varied breeds of the ornamental types among our domestic fowls. Those distinctively known as "ornamental" (therefore es-

pecially beautiful, of course) are the ones that show most variation in colors and markings. The plain are simply—well, **plain**, and that is all there is to it.

Many of the judges, I am told, have Indian Runners. I can name several whom I know to breed them. Of course, they have exceptional opportunities to get good, Standard birds, and it would be too much to expect of human nature that all these people should now be willing to have a differing bird made Standard, off hand, no matter if it is the true, original Runner, and a better, economic bird.

There were, in a dozen of the best poultry papers, during the height of the 1910 season, something like 160 breeders advertising Indian Runners, virtually all claiming the "true" type. Those of the plain-feather camp, meant "true to American Standard." Those who bred the original Runner, meant "true to the English Standard type," though I fancy most of them have tried to lighten the color as to make the pencilings rather indistinct. Indeed indistinct penciling is what the English Standard calls for.

The content of "truth" in the Indian Runner of the future should be incontestably large, since there is so much variation, yet all "true." It is also true that variation is likely to continue. Among all the breeders whom I know to have carried the English type, the large majority have announced their intention of keeping to that type, regardless of what the American Standard for fancy fowls may be. The chief, economic reasons which they give are: the better laying of the English type; and, the white eggs. The promise is, then, that there will continue to be bred in this country two types of Indian Runner, differing from each other really more than the white Orpington, say, differs from the white Plymouth Rock. Both will claim to be "true," and the confusion that will result will be intensified as numbers increase.

This means that it behooves every one who wants Indian



Runners, no matter of which type, to inform himself thoroughly as to the differences in the two types, and to be very sure that he buys of a breeder who has what he wants. The two types have been **bred together**, which of course makes more confusion. The oldest of the breeders here of the English type sold birds, years ago, to the chief promoters of the American Standard type of to-day. Very many breeders have tried both types. Perhaps a dozen of them have written of their experiences in the poultry papers. Of them all, I think only one has reported that the American type were the better layers. All the others stated that, when handled side by side, the English type were the better layers.

I am not for a minute in opposition to those who really want to breed the Runner of the American, Standard type. What I do want, is to make sure that the farmers who are to supply the great majority of buyers of Indian Runner eggs for hatching, for some years at least, shall get the type of bird that will prove most practical. They will stand, to a man, for the white-egg type, I am certain. They will also stand for the English type strongly when they are made to know that it calls for a bird with longer body, and therefore with more egg and meat capacity. Even the Secretary of the National Indian Runner Club said publicly (June, 1910): "If we lower the type and egg production by having them fawn and white, we certainly should have a different Standard."

When we think of the best English Indian Runners, a yard long from tip of bill to tip of tail, and compare them, mentally, with the runty, American Standard type too often shown, it is easy to see why the breeders to American Standard fight against having the Standard weight raised. Many of the pictures of the American type show a bird with neck about as long as body, not including tail, the body being short and stumpy at the stern like the one at the right in our cut of the American Standard-bred males. Often the stern is so stumpy that it gives a peculiar impression of being "out of drawing

some way, as an artist would say. It does not balance gracefully. The effect of having the legs set so far back in order to get the running balance, and then tucking the stern up so stumpily, is indeed, ungraceful in the extreme. The exhibition birds shown in contrast to the charming graceful white Runner, are from some of the most prominent breeders of the "American" type of Runner. Neither in shape nor in carriage can they compare with really good Indian Runners.

If each breeder will have the courage of his convictions, and advertise plainly what he has, it will save much confusion for buyers, and an immense amount of disparagement of Indian Runner breeders. At the present writing, there are plenty of buyers for both types. A short time ago, I received an inquiry for "first-class fawn and white stock." Believing that this customer wanted the American type, I answered briefly, telling him that the English type of Runner which I carried, would not win firsts for him in any large show, under present Standard demands. To my surprise, back came a letter wanting my birds, the price being the same as would have been asked for the same grade of birds bred to American Standard.

It is scarcely possible, I think, to insist too strongly that those who believe in the Indian Runner as bred to the specific, English Standard, should make clear in each advertisement, just what they are offering. Only in this way, can we avoid the infinite confusion which is likely to arise.

Personally, I think it would be only just if classes should be made, at least in all the larger shows, for the English-bred duck. It would be the only *amende* that could be made for having taken the breed name away from this duck and given it to a mongrel-made duck. It is perfectly practicable, as I see it, to have classes for the English type, and judged by the English Standard.

As I write the closing words of this chapter, there comes to

my desk a new booklet from a breeder of the "fawn and white" type for the last six years. Referring to the Runners of the American type, he mentions their "real value as a layer of large, green and white eggs of much value." He also states that he would prefer all white eggs. Inasmuch as this testimony comes from the midst of the "fawn and white" camp, surely none who breed the English type can be accused of unfairness or of bias in making similar statements. And for their own trade, they need only to make it widely known that they have the strain known to lay white eggs, and trade will run to meet them.

## Indian Runners Ducks and FARM BREEDING

### CHAPTER XI

A letter concerning Indian Runners which came to me in December, 1910, says: "I've tried several breeders in the north and south to find one who bred the white-egg duck. One, I believed, and parted with my money, only to discover that I had bought "green" ducks. The breeder claimed she could fill my demand, as both parents and grandparents, for that matter, were hatched from white eggs."

Another farmer, who does a business large enough to run about 1200 eggs in incubators through April, and who has recently made a start with English-bred Runners, says: "I have picked out six females, all marked alike, fawn with concentric penciling, and will reserve same for our own breeding. Our females are well taken care of and with good care and attention to them I am looking for a great egg yield. I am going to write up a piece to have published later about a farmer's experience with Indian Runners, and I hope it will have weight with that class. For if the average farmer can get eggs in winter from the Runners when their hens do not lay, you can rest assured they will have some."

Because I see no future before the Indian Runner, eventually, except as a farm duck, I am especially glad to get the farm point of

view. The above letter was sent on to me by a breeder in another state, that I might see how farm interest was developing. It will be noted that, although the writer carries far more than the average of poultry on a farm, as evidenced by his incubating so many eggs, he is looking for something that can do better in winter than is customary with hens. He is of the better class of farmers, we can guess, because he selects uniformly marked birds for breeding. He has enterprise, as is shown by the facts noted, and by his plan to write up his experience where it will attract other farmers. Beyond what his letter may thus show us, I know nothing about him. But I wish the country was fuller than it is of farmers with several of the characteristics which show in this letter. However, dealing continually, in my work with queries from farmers all over the country, I can testify that there are many more of the class who have enterprise, education and good hard sense than people who do not come into touch with them are ready to believe.

There are already many types of Indian Runners in the country, entirely aside from the two very distinct and opposing ones to which so much reference has already been made. It is almost impossible for any breeder to put his hand to a breed without transforming it to some extent. This is abundantly shown even in the references to the "strains" of different breeders, and to the differing claims made by advertisers. How are these changes made? Often—very often, by "hocus-pocus." That is, by putting in a dash of ANY blood which a breeder may think will bring the birds nearer to his ideal—usually an ideal as to feathers and form, rather than as to production. Production cannot be ignored, to be sure, but it is made to take at least third place; for color comes first with the average fancier, then form, then, if he has no other hobby to work out, production, possibly.

But it is also true that no two breeders can take even the same strain, with birds very similar, and, working entirely apart, show the same type of birds at the end of five years. Each puts his own stamp



upon the breed, or variety. It may be that all the change has been made by selection of eggs. It may be that it has been made only in the selection of birds to carry on his work. The fact remains that each worker is practically certain to put his own special stamp, "his mark" upon the birds which he will soon call his "strain."

A breeder who was especially anxious to preserve and continue a certain type, wrote another for birds of that type, to be descended from birds sent out from the yards of the first, some years earlier. It was made plain that only such birds were wanted. The testimony of the first breeder to the outcome is as follows: "I asked, before ordering, if they were just as had of me, and in return the breeder wrote that they were my strain, PURE (with the words underlined). When they came and I examined them, I could see that other blood had been used; the penciling was different, not so distinct, of a prettier shade of fawn, if anything; but they were hardly as good in shape and style, and I was in a panic. I thought I would return them, but finally sold most of them, telling the customers just what they were. The remaining suspects I shall put in a yard by themselves and observe them." Eventually, it came out that the breeder from whom these ducks came had had one male from a third breeder running with the females of the first breeder's stock. There was no suspicion of intentional error, as far as I know, for breeder number two was considered honest; but the incident shows both how soon change of strain shows in the progeny, and how difficult it is to get just what one wants and definitely orders. Human nature seems to have a strangely transforming effect on varieties of fowls.

A breeder who had had fawn ducks of two types, from two breeders, wrote me: "I am satisfied that I hurt the laying qualities by use of the light strain, (the second lot)." Both these acquisitions proving to be layers of green eggs, this breeder bought birds again, the third lot being from a well-known white-egg strain. Another change then made itself manifest, of which he writes: "My old ducks could

not and would not fly under any circumstances like the last ones. One is far ahead of any I have ever seen in upright carriage, and I would like to get all of mine of that type."

There is one pointer here that is worth noting. The white egg ducks are of the more active type, and also of better carriage than anything furnished this breeder by two of the very best breeders of the solid fawn strains.

Being a very honest man, the writer of this letter was anxious to know about the tendency to flying BECAUSE he had told customers that a two-foot fence would confine these ducks. I chanced to have a personal word to add to the solution of this problem, because I had bred for some time the very strain he reported as being such flyers, and had never used anything but a two-foot fence to confine them, nor ever known them to fly over it. But it is perfectly easy to train these birds, or any others, to be breachy, by using fences too low or too weak when the birds are young and most active. The size of yards, too, may have an influence on this especial characteristic. Small yards, which offer no good starting point for strong flight, will often confine the birds—any birds—much better than larger yards. That is, not such high fences will be demanded. It is in the daily and yearly learning of such things as these as they come along, that any poultry raiser gets "knack" and accumulates a store of wisdom on innumerable points which it is simply impossible to pass on in entirety to any other worker. It is one point at a time usually.

Just before we go to press with "The Indian Runner Duck Book," an authoritative letter from England is received. It tells of many inquiries for cheap birds coming from America and says: "There is no one with real good type birds willing to sell at utility prices. In fact, I have seen birds for which ten to twenty pounds (about fifty to one hundred dollars) was asked, of very bad type and carriage; in my opinion, fit only for the pot. I think it unfair to ask those who have really good birds to sell them for killing prices, almost." Concerning

one of the newer American theories as to the origin of Indian Runners, the same breeder says: "It is worth framing, as it is one of the most incorrect and ridiculous articles I have seen, and the writer is entirely at sea. 'The Common Mongrel, etc.,' would have been a more appropriate title."

In this connection, I may say that there is a movement in England at this writing which promises to develop into the publication of a thorough and reliable book on the Indian Runner, giving all that is now known about its history, from the first to the present time. This is certainly a movement in the right direction, and I shall look with much interest for the purposed publication.

The Patent Office at Washington has recently been showing symptoms of interest in the Runners, through an employe. Whether they are to be patented, or not, is not yet announced. If so, many breeders will be on edge to learn which type will thus receive recognition!

In other directions, also, matters are moving. I think it was late in 1910, though I am not quite certain as to the date, that a breeder in the east sent a trio of English-bred Indian Runners to the Government Experiment Station of Porto Rico, for experimental purposes. It is quite time some one in authority was doing something with these ducks, on this side of the Atlantic ocean. For, if the things which Indian Runner breeders have been saying have been untrue, they would result in uncounted waste of money for the thousands of farmers who will try them. Whereas, if they can be proved true by some of those in whom the farming contingent have confidence, it will mean hundreds of thousands of dollars for the farmer's pockets. We know positively that breeders in this country, even women on the farms, are making hundreds of dollars from their Indian Runners each year. On the date of January 26, 1911, I received a circular from one such woman, claiming that her ducks were made to average over ten dollars each in eight months. It is not likely that this was from

market eggs, however. The crying need at present is for some Experiment Station here to make an exhaustive test of both types of Indian Runners for the benefit of the American farmer, on the market egg basis.

Australia and New Zealand are far ahead of us in the things they do for the benefit of the farming population and the common people at large. But, as these matters depend largely on the common people's vote, it may be said that they are the ones chiefly to blame for what they do not get. The average man does not even know what his government is trying to do for him. And the Government is usually far more anxious to do something for him than he is to have things done, if we may judge by what is on the surface. Professors of Poultry Husbandry, for instance, are jubilant when they succeed, by all the arts at their command, in getting the names of many farmers. This is just because they know the Station can help the farmers, as soon as it gets into touch with them. And the best help must come through work with the farmers, man by man. In the matter of choice of type in the Indian Runner, I am in a position to know that our Agricultural authorities at Washington deliberately threw aside a chance to do something for the farming people in studying the two warring types of the Indian Runner. They assumed that the fanciers were right in breeding to fawn, simply because the fawn contingent was in the majority and slavishly followed the Standard. As an interesting commentary on this, a disgusted word from one who has bred Indian Runners for years fits in as nothing else could. He was engaged in the practical job of catching birds to fill a shipment and for his own breeding pens. Color study was, of course, a main feature in O. K.-ing, or discarding specimens, and, as is always the case, many birds that looked well on their feet had to be rated as seconds on account of fawn in the flight feathers. I happened to be looking on, and heard his dictum: "Color in Indian Runners is nothing but a humbug anyway, for they change color every two months. How are

you going to describe the color fairly when that is the case? It is out of the question! And who is going to say which is the right color, that of December, or of March or of June?" It struck me that this was as pungent a comment on the folly of ruining the distinctiveness of the Indian Runner (because some one happened to think fawn in solid color was more desirable than any two shades of fawn penciled together might be) as could possibly be made. The question must always be, Which of the varying shades of fawn is Standard fawn, and when shall the bird be judged on color,—in winter or in summer? If in summer, or spring, is must be far too dark in December; if in December it is to be just right, it will be nothing but dirty white in June. And this everybody knows.

I saw two breeders selecting a bird to fill an order that called for a high class specimen. The choice lay between two birds, one of which was nearly perfect in color, but was only moderately long in body and neck. The other was of beautiful shape and carriage, but had a flaw in the wing flight. "Which would you send? Which would you rather have if you were choosing for your own yard?" said one to the other. "The slim, long bird, every time," was the reply. "What,—sure! even with the flawed wing, and remembering that it will affect the whole flock?" "Yes; even at that. I stand for type first." "But what about shipping it to a customer? Would you decide on that one to fill the order?" "No—o, I'm afraid not," was the half unwilling reply. "The customer will be better satisfied with the bird that is better in color."

All who have bred Runners long know this to be the case; and the reason is that, though Standard law, as generally applied, theoretically puts shape above color, in actual practice, color, (when at all hard to get) virtually takes precedence of type, as the birds are judged in competition. And this is what every breeder of Standard birds has to meet. He dares not send what he believes to be the better bird, many times, because custom has over-ridden Standard Law. The very



simple reason is, doubtless, that color appeals far more quickly to the average person, than does shape. Many a breeder of years standing, cannot select the birds typical in shape and style. And the public, which sees the shows and which buys stock, is more easily satisfied with the better colored bird, when it becomes a choice between color and shape, unless the shape is inexcusably bad.

## The Newer Variety

# THE WHITE INDIAN RUNNER

### CHAPTER XII

The future of the Indian Runners is bound to include the variety just coming into sight here, viz., the White Indian Runners. Though but recently advertised for the first in this country, the White Indian Runners promise to interest the public at large so greatly that a few words must be given them even now. In California, in the middle-west, in the middle states, they are already being advertised. One cannot say much that is definite about their quality, as it is likely, it seems to me, to be exceedingly "spotty" for some time.

My reasons for thinking thus lie largely in the fact that the very evident crossing of some of the original importations of Indian Runners with white ducks has resulted in the badly-mixed specimens, showing much broken white, of which buyers of Indian Runners have complained so bitterly recently. There cannot be much doubt that the majority of White Indian Runners have arisen through some of these crosses. The most likely cross is that of the White Pekin duck. I saw Pekins in a recent very large show, that



"THE WHITE QUEEN."

Perhaps the most perfect type of Indian Runner Duck ever produced in America

were as upright in carriage as almost any of the Runners, and one specimen in especial that was fully as erect in carriage as any Indian Runner I have ever seen shown. As the Revision Committee's recommendation at St. Louis was for a body one-fourth longer than the ideal presented them by the artist, and a clean-cut throat without dewlap, the Pekin will be even better than in the past, as a promising foundation for a cross leading to White Indian Runners. A Runner built on such a foundation would be too broad and thick-set, for many generations, no doubt; but human nature is such that it would doubtless be used, in the future; as it has in the past, if pointers from experience can be at all relied upon.

I wish to call especial attention to the cut of a White Indian Runner female given herewith. It is by far the most typical specimen of the Ideal Indian Runner, that I have ever seen. This bird is, moreover, a straight sport, as far as anything I really know can show. I do know that no white blood has been introduced into her ancestry since it came into my hands, some years ago. Other breeding experience would make any of us argue that there must be white blood somewhere behind her. As to proof,—there is none, and the testimony of her beautiful shape seems to throw the Pekin out of consideration, unless, by some trick of Mendel's law, we have a dominant white from the Pekin, in connection with a dominant shape from a Runner ancestor. But I think Mendel's law, as he would have had it applied, is being more questioned now than ever before since Professor Bateson brought it to our notice. That is, the many investigation experiments, in the effort to prove it a breeding law, seem to show it less helpful generally in breeding than was at first expected.

These White Indian Runners are not an absolutely new product except in possible specific cases. Mr. H. DeCourcy, speaking of the Runners as they appeared in Ireland some years ago, wrote, in the "Reliable Poultry Journal" that the Runners had been bred for

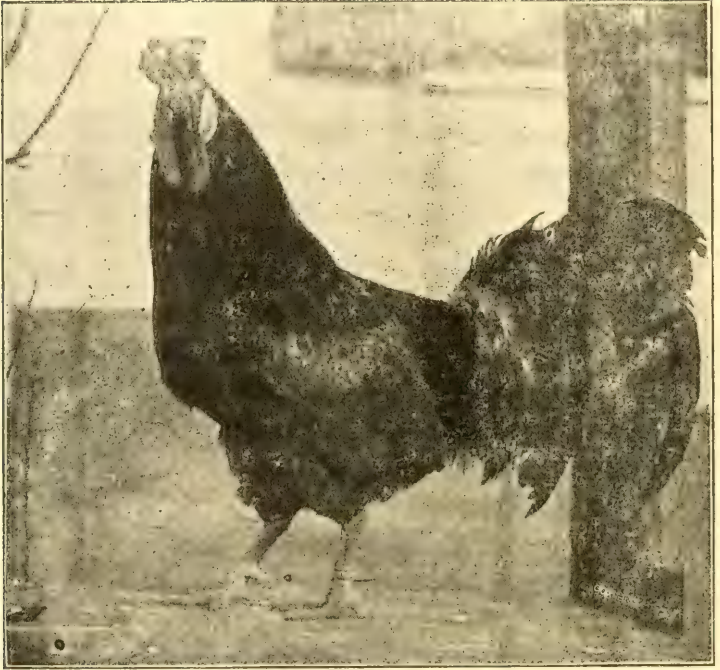
several years by farmers with no regard to type and feathering. Yet he states that the distinctive features of the bird were so fixed that they still tended to dominate. I notice that he refers to the "carriage" as penguin-like, not making the blunder of the American 1905 Standard in saying that the form is like the penguin, which is positively absurd!

He speaks of three distinct varieties at the time of writing, known in Ireland, and says that the penciled fawn and white—"a beautifully-penciled fawn color," as he describes it—"certainly has a distinctive shape and carriage which the other varieties possess but in a modified form, and it is most probable that both the Brown-and-White and the White varieties have been bred from the original Fawn-and-White, either by the admixture of foreign blood, or by selection, or by both."

This testimony must be considered by any fair mind as absolutely unbiased, because it was given before our Standard-makers discovered that the plain fawn, with white, was "the one and only true." It was published in this country before there was any question of breeding to a solid fawn as far as our Standard was concerned; though our Standard was fitted to some sports in the hands of a single breeder,—if I am correctly informed,—soon after.

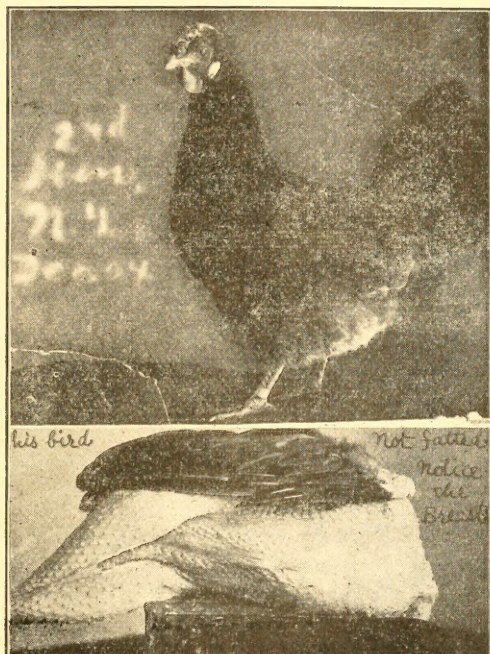
The white bird, everywhere and always, is a popular bird. And, as soon as the public is assured that it breeds true in any measure, we may look for a strong movement toward the White Runner. Some pretty good specimens were shown in New York in November, 1910.





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